

PRIVATE TRIALS
AND
PUBLIC CALAMITIES:
OR,
THE EARLY LIFE OF
ALEXANDRINE DES ECHEROLLES.

VOL. II.

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PRIVATE TRIALS

AND

PUBLIC CALAMITIES:

OR,

THE EARLY LIFE OF ALEXANDRINE DES ECHEROLLES, DURING THE TROUBLES OF THE FIRST FRENCH REVOLUTION.

FROM THE FRENCH.

BY THE TRANSLATOR OF "THE SICILIAN VESPERS," AND THE
AUTHOR OF "GENTLE INFLUENCE."

"Courage was cast about her like a dress
Of solemn ~~comp~~eliness.
A gathered mind, and an untroubled face,
Did give her dangers grace." DORNE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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SECOND VOLUME.

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PRIVATE TRIALS
AND
PUBLIC CALAMITIES:
OR,
The Early Life of
ALEXANDRINE DES ECHEROLLES.

CHAPTER I.

Blood must be my body's balmer,
While my soul, like peaceful palmer,
Travelleth tow'rds the land of heaven;
Other balm will not be given.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

Alas! and we love so well,
In a world where anguish like this can dwell!

MRS. HEMANS.

MY AUNT INTERROGATED—HER FELLOW-CAPTIVES—MY AUNT
TAKEN TO THE BAD VAULT—I APPEAL TO PARCIN, CORCHANT,
AND P—— IN VAIN—MY AUNT EXECUTED.

My aunt was at the Town Hall! There was no
more looking forward to the future! Nothing to

be contemplated but the fearful present, a day which might have no morrow ! God knows what was the anguish of my heart !

I hastened thither at once, and on seeing the great red seal upon my order, the sentinels suffered me to pass, and the gaoler admitted me without difficulty.

I found my aunt in the Hall of Commerce, with all her companions, besides several other prisoners, who either had been examined already or were about to be so. This hall, adjoining which was the revolutionary tribunal, was on the first floor, and the window commanded a view of the whole Place des Terreaux, at the end of which was the guillotine.

What I said to my aunt I know not ; but I kissed her and clasped her in my arms. Almost bewildered at finding myself there, I dared not breathe, I dared hardly think, lest I should make a noise and in some way increase the danger and compromise her.

A crowd of people filled this room, which contained no furniture, and of which the parquet floor was covered by a thick layer of straw, ground to fragments beneath the feet of the unfortunate persons who trampled it in their restless paces to and fro. It was an abode of anguish, a brief sojourn

between life and death ; and how much sorrow had it not witnessed. All felt that every tie was then about to be severed, and the words " life or death," hovered on the lips of all !

Within this narrow space, each one of these prisoners, bending beneath the burden of his own fate, struggled against his alarms, and moved restlessly about, unable to endure his fears, his hopes, and above all the tortures of suspense. We also, in our agitation, paced quickly up and down. My aunt had already appeared before this sanguinary tribunal, and had been accused of fanaticism—an accusation grounded on the little book of prayers found in her pocket,—and of her influence over her brother, whom they said she had instigated to rebellion, of which she had herself favoured the progress. After a few more insignificant questions she had been dismissed. The examinations were still going on ; we heard the prisoners called one after another, and saw them go out and soon return, for the judges got through their business quickly. All returned in ignorance of their fate, but such uncertainty did not last long.

When the person accused was sentenced to be shot, the president of the tribunal raised his hand to his forehead ; when he was to be guillotined, he touched the axe hanging from his bosom. Lastly,

if he were to be set at liberty, he laid his hand upon the register placed beside him. The prisoners themselves were ignorant of the meaning of these signs, which, if carelessly made, or imperfectly interpreted, may probably have cost many lives. Let us hope that some may likewise have been saved by them.

In the midst of this unquiet crowd, I recognised Chinard, the sculptor, whom I had seen at the Recluses.* I beheld him pacing the room with long strides, which, in the agitation of his mind, he hastened as the decisive moment drew near, elbowing and running against every one, although perceiving no one. He seemed to believe himself alone, and having no consciousness but for him-

* Chinard had powerful enemies as well as powerful friends. Three times he had been set free, and three times he had been again arrested on the Place des Terreaux itself, upon fresh accusations. I believe he was more fortunate this time. The revolutionary barbarism, which waged war against every trace of royalty, had broken the statue of Henry IV., which adorned the front of the Town Hall. Chinard was ordered to make one of Liberty to replace it. The attitude he chose was not approved. The goddess held the civic crown in rather an awkward manner, and not sufficiently forward. The Jacobins attributed this to an intentional want of respect to the divinity, and a wish to render her worship ridiculous. And this was one of the worst crimes attributed to him by his enemies.

self, he was speaking aloud. "Shall I at length be set free? Is it true that I shall cross the threshold of these doors? But will it be to live, to return hither once more—or—?" And his gaze traversing the Place des Terreaux, rested upon the guillotine.

I saw also the so-called soldier-girl.* A good

* I saw her for the first time at the Recluses. She habitually wore a man's great coat. Her manners were rough and her speech abrupt, but she was an excellent creature. I believe she was the daughter of a shopkeeper at Thiers, and had fled from home in order to follow her lover to Lyons, where he was killed during the siege, as stated above. As she was taken in arms, there was every reason to think she would be condemned. She frequently drew near my aunt, and sought consolation from intercourse with her. She had said to her long before, "I shall die, and I deserve it; but you will live, and you deserve to do so. Promise me that when you are free you will go to Thiers, to my father and mother, and tell them, that I beg them to forgive me; that I died penitent, and have atoned for the faults of my lifetime by an honourable death." I saw her tremble as she was about to appear before the judges; but when summoned to the tribunal she controlled her fears, and came forward with a firm step: "Well," said she, with an oath, and resuming her military tone, "you wish to kill me, as your bullets killed my lover. Here I am, make haste and let me follow him—do not keep me waiting." This language pleased them, and she was acquitted.

girl and a brave soldier, who had assumed the uniform of her lover slain beside her, in order to avenge his death, and to replace the man missing at his post. She was an excellent creature and beloved by all, but even she trembled then.

Madame de St. Fons was violently agitated, and the change that was taking place in her mind might already have been perceived, but that all were absorbed in other thoughts.* The greater number of the ladies were calm and resigned, and waited in silence.

I know not how it was that even then the ultimate fate of some few was suspected. A blessed gleam of light had shone upon a few ladies who knew that they should be set at liberty. I cannot forget the difference between the faces which beamed with hope and those which had bidden farewell to it. The Place des Terreaux was already crowded with people, eager to see and welcome those who were set free. My aunt was not amongst them. "I know," said she to me, "that

* Madame de St. Fons had not strength of mind to endure her sentence of condemnation. When in the middle of the night they came to convey the ladies to the *bad vault*, she was out of her mind. An act of clemency, very unusual at that time, sent her to an asylum. I do not know what became of her afterwards.

many women are to be put to death this tenth day, and I know what my own fate will be. I shall die." I endeavoured to combat this conviction, but did not succeed in shaking it. I could not make up my mind to contemplate her loss.

I think I see her still, as calm and resigned as her companions in misfortune, and with a countenance full of serenity. People were moving about and around us, but she perceived no one. Her eyes were fixed upon me, and I had eyes for her alone. My heart was overflowing with misery, and was yet filled with a kind of joy, that of love enduring until death. I was conscious only of her presence, and yet it seems to me as if a veil were drawn over those last moments. I cannot even recollect her words. But words are few at such a moment.

"You will come back after the release of the prisoners, and bring me my dinner yourself."* She was very near the door, and gazing at me

* Every tenth day a certain number of prisoners were set free. Great pomp attended this ceremony; which, while it declared the innocence of a few, rendered the guilt of the many more probable. It was a show of justice which satisfied the people. It even sometimes happened that those who were set at liberty in the morning, were again imprisoned in the evening, and subsequently led to the scaffold.

with eyes full of gentleness and sadness, as she embraced me for the last time. Oh, my God! was this her blessing? Why did the door open and then close upon me? I never saw her more.

The gaoler put the finishing stroke to my misery by tearing up my order. "It is not valid," said he, "you cannot be admitted again." A lingering feeling of compassion had induced him to let me in.

"Oh! do let me in again, never to come out," cried I, pressing with all my might against the door which had already parted me from her for ever. "Can I not see her again?"

But the door opened no more. I was driven from it, found myself in the ante-chamber of the tribunal, and was driven on further still. All was over.

A great part of this day is an absolute blank in my memory. One thought absorbed all others, I was not to see her again; and what was all beside to me!

St. Jean was present at the release of the prisoners. He looked sad when he returned, and I durst not question him, nor did he venture to tell me the names of those who were released. Everything seemed conspiring to warn me that she must die. I was in a state of complete prostration.

Old Forêt, touched by my distress, dressed himself in his best and went to his son, the member of the municipal council, to endeavour to interest him in my aunt's fate. This was an act of great courage on his part, and I was much touched by it, though I had little hope from it, remembering the words of this bloodthirsty man. His entreaties were fruitless, and he came home ashamed of his son, silent and sad, for he was naturally kind-hearted, and but for his weakness would have been an honest man.

Towards evening Madame de Bellecise sent me word to come up to her. Her daughter, Madame Milanés, set at liberty that morning, was come to see her. The blood curdled to my heart. "No, no," I exclaimed, "I cannot, I will not see her. What has my aunt done that she too should not be set at liberty?"

My soul was overflowing with bitterness. Suddenly I beheld at my side the still beautiful face of Madame de Bellecise. Her grey hair, the mild serenity of her countenance, the virtues of her whole life, combined to fit her for the office of the angel of consolation. She had obtained her keeper's leave to come down to me. Her looks of affection were the first to greet me; and she spoke to me with a gentle tenderness which dis-

armed my resistance. I followed her, but it cost me a great effort; and in the vehemence of my sorrow I even thought it unjust in her to compel me to do so.

It was, however, from kindness that Madame Milanés was anxious to see me, and had she not been afraid of my keeper, she would have come herself; but her position was one which demanded the utmost circumspection, and made it essential to her safety that she should do all in her power to escape notice.

I burst into tears at the sight of her, and she wept with me as she reflected upon my loneliness. There was something so maternal in her pity that my heart opened to her. She endeavoured to comfort me, and to give me a shadow of hope based upon the length of time that some of the prisoners had been detained at the Hôtel de Ville, previous to being set at liberty. She told me that she should be apprised of all that passed there, and would inform me of it, in order that I might take all the necessary steps to obtain my aunt's deliverance. "You must spare no effort to save her," added she. And I went to bed a little more calm because there still remained something for me to do for the object of my undivided affection.

Madame Milanés' maid, a very active and intelligent person, who was acquainted with most of those in power, and had rendered important services to her mistress, came early the next morning to fetch me. My aunt was in the *bad vault*, whither she had been removed in the night. "There is then no hope!" cried I.

"To-day, at least," she replied, "there will be no executions. The regiment and the revolutionary army of Paris have refused to serve together; they have been fighting, and their disunion gives us one day's respite. Come, you must take advantage of it to endeavour to see Parcin, the President of the Tribunal."

I followed her to the Quay St. Clair, where he lived. It was said that before he became a terrorist, he had been an indifferent shoemaker, on a small scale.

We waited in the court-yard of his house, together with a great many women of all ranks, gathered thither, doubtless, by the same sad cause. People were not permitted to approach those in power, and we had waited a long time when we saw an officer rapidly descending the stairs and walking away. "Is that Parcin?" cried a few voices.

"No," replied a man stationed there to inter-

cept our advance ; “that is the Commandant of the Place.”

“Run and overtake him,” said my protectress, in a low voice. “It is he, I know him ; but it is true that he is commandant, and he does not wish to be recognised.”

He walked so fast that I had some difficulty in overtaking him, and when I did so I was too much out of breath to speak plain. As he did not stop at the sound of my voice, I took him by the arm, and running along beside him I gave a free vent to my grief.

“She is not guilty ! No doubt she is mistaken for some one else ; let her be interrogated again. Give her back to me ! She is innocent ! Give her back to me ! I am an orphan, and have none left but her. What will become of me without her ? She is my second mother ; I owe her everything. She is my support—she is all that remains to me—she is innocent ! Examine her again ; restore her to me. She is innocent !”

I could utter none but disjointed exclamations. My emotion and the speed with which we walked stifled my voice and my breathing. His countenance appeared to me perfectly impassible. I did not see there a trace of feeling. He did not once look at me, and merely let fall these words—“I

will see." I redoubled my entreaties. "I will see," he again repeated, and rudely repulsing me, he redoubled his speed.

My companion now rejoined me, and took me to the house of Corchant, one of the judges. He was more accessible, and we were permitted to enter. He was at his toilet, and his beard was being trimmed. He had the reputation of being milder than his colleagues, but his sole reply to my urgent entreaties was likewise only—"We will see."

We were unable to obtain access to the other judges. At length I went to Marino; he received me civilly, but refused to interfere. "This business does not concern me," said he.

"But," resumed I, bursting into tears, "cannot you say a good word for me?" He was not to be moved, however.

I passed the whole day in the streets, wandering about the Hôtel de Ville. Madame Milanés had written for me a brief petition to Parcin; I gave it to him myself at the corner of a street. "I will see," was all he replied. At length, in the evening, I went to the office of the Provisional Commission, and waited as usual in the ante-room, exposed to all the coarse gibes of the soldiers on duty. "What, crying! have you lost your lover? No matter, you will find another." And one

of them drew near me. Heavens! how much bitterness was mingled with my grief! At that moment some one said to me: "Here comes Citizen P——."

It was he that I was waiting for; I had already sought him at his lodgings,* and wished to entreat him once more. Weeping, I sprang forward to meet him. "It is my aunt; it is her life that I would obtain! She's a mother to me! She is all I have! Why cannot I die with her?" exclaimed I, repeating my constant cry.

"As an individual, I feel for your distress, but as a public man I can do nothing for you." And he turned his back upon me, without any sign or semblance of pity.

This man to whom I had addressed my petition—whom I had seen at my father's house, who had sate at his table, whom I had approached without shrinking—was the very man who had pronounced her death-warrant. "Let her perish," was his reply to those who said to him "There is nothing against this townswoman of yours." "Let

* I had found him like one partially stupified by drunkenness — his eyes half closed, red, and swollen. Wearied by excesses, no doubt, he could no longer sleep—how could he have found rest? He received me without harshness, but refused all my entreaties.

her perish; let the soil of the Republic be freed from her. She is a monster of aristocracy." And it was that man that I implored with all the fearless abandonment of intense grief. My tears flowed unchecked, my words likewise; no fear restrained me, for what was there now left for me to fear?*

The next day I went early to the Town Hall, and stationed myself at the bottom of the stairs which led to the tribunal, in hopes of seeing the judges go by. But no one appeared; doubtless there were other accesses which enabled them to escape the clamours of importunate petitioners. It was then that a man, having asked my name, made me a sign to follow him. I did so at a distance with a beating heart, in the hope of seeing her again, but in this I was disappointed. I mounted to the third floor, where my guide led me into a room which looked out upon the court, and then having satisfied himself that no one had seen me, he gave me my aunt's knife and her

* The Abbé Guillon de Montléon says that P—— was the President of the Provisional Commission. I did not then know his office, but I knew him to be powerful. I learnt afterwards that he had been her murderer. He is the only one of those great criminals whom I could not have borne to see again.

étui, which she sent to me, and which had been consigned to him, he said, by a man whom he did not know. She knew then that I was at hand; she guessed that I should be found near the place of her confinement. I received these precious memorials with profound respect, and pleaded urgently for the favour of being admitted to see her; but he was deaf to my questions, unmoved by my prayers, and would undertake nothing.

Some few people did, I believe, obtain access to the *bad vault*, but the price demanded was immense, and what had I to give? I reverently kissed the treasures which my aunt had touched. Some compassionate souls were then still left, whose mission was to mingle some sweetness with the bitter cup we were called upon to drink. Perhaps, although he would promise nothing, this man may have reported to my aunt the words of her child, and afforded her loving heart the only consolation it might yet experience, by saying, "I have seen her; she loves you, weeps for you, and prays for you!"

During this wretched morning I never quitted the Town Hall. I was in a state of misery which I cannot describe. I wandered about the courts without finding what I sought, and had not the sentinels turned me back, I should have gone to

the very tribunal to ask for her. At length I stood transfixed before the fatal door through which she was to go out; I wished to see her once more, and then to die also. To see her, though I feared lest she should see me, and her courage might be shaken; and yet I kept crying out "I must see her again!" But here my memory fails. I saw people inquiring into the cause of my tears, which alone made me aware that they were flowing. I heard the hours strike; how quickly they passed. One quarter to twelve! I wanted to stay. Twelve!—Some one endeavoured to lead me away; and I went. Why did I go? Why did my courage fail? Could she think that I had forsaken her? If there be any consideration which can afford me consolation for not having seen her again, it is that the sight of me and of my grief might have rendered her sacrifice the more bitter.

CHAPTER II.

The world's a room of sickness, where each heart
Knows its own anguish and unrest ;
The truest wisdom there, and noblest art,
Is his, who skills of comfort best ;
Whom by the softest step and gentlest tone
Enfeebled spirits own,
And love to raise the languid eye,
When, like an angel's wing, they feel him fleeting by.

KEBLE.

MY AUNT'S LAST NOTE—MADAME DE BELLECISE—MADAME MILANES
—SHE WISHES ME TO GO TO SWITZERLAND—I REFUSE.

I WAS in a state of almost entire stupefaction, and overwhelmed with sorrow, when, about three o'clock, a knock was heard, and a woman, who was a stranger to us, left a note, and withdrew. The note was from my aunt, who was already with the dead, whose loss overpowered me with such bitter sorrow, and flung so dark

a shadow over my youth. The note was as follows.*

“My best love to you, my dear good child. My note of yesterday did not reach you: be careful of your health and of that of your two friends. Many thanks for the coffee: I have just drank some. I beg of you to go and see your sister with them. Ask for nothing back, and send me very little. All belongs to Cantat and Marigni. I embrace you with all my heart, but have no hope of doing so in person. I have asked to be examined again. Take care of your health, and love your aunt who loves you, and prays for your happiness and to see you again. Do not try to obtain leave to see me. Much kind love to our neighbours; seek to interest them in your fate. Farewell, my dear little girl.

“I send you a box (it was a snuff-box, which I did not receive, nor yet the other articles alluded to; I suppose the man who gave me the *étui* and the knife, kept them for himself), which you can send back at dinner-time to-morrow, together with the *étui*, and the other trifles. I have another

* It is painful to me to give to the public words so dear and so sacred, which can have comparatively little interest for them. I wished to re-write these pages, but my courage failed me.

box for to-day, and have need of nothing. I wish I could repay what I owe you. I am quite well."

This note, which was directed to Cantat, was written on a bit of paper which seemed to have been torn from an old book, and was without a date. Those who lived in those fearful times may detect the prudence and the foresight which dictated lines apparently so simple; and appreciate the tranquil resignation which does not even utter one superfluous word, much less a shadow of complaint. All, however, may admire it. It was from God alone that could be derived the strength which was her sole support and her glory.

What were my feelings on reading this simple note, traced by a hand now laid at rest for ever! But a few hours ago, in the fulness of health and vigour, her soul had ascended to heaven after dedicating its last thoughts to the consolation of my grief. "I am quite well—I love you, and wish I could repay what I owe you." What could she owe me for services which it was my happiness to render to her? She had loved me with a mother's love, and had been arrested and perished in the stead of my father.

How much counsel was contained in this note, in which she had doubtless restrained the expres-

sion of her affection, lest, like the one of the preceding day, it should be prevented from reaching me !

“ Take care of your health,” was twice repeated. “ My two friends,” meant St. Jean and Cantat. She was grateful for the trouble they had had in her service ; and by speaking of them, thus hoped to induce them to remain faithful to me. “ Ask for nothing back ;” she was fearful lest I should expose myself to danger by reclaiming our sequestered goods. In saying “ all belongs to Cantat and Marigni,” she conveyed to them an intimation to claim them for me. A similar feeling of prudence made her forbid me to seek to see her. This prohibition was an eternal farewell ; it was to tell me whither she was gone. “ Send me but very little,” meant that her life would be short ; that she should no longer receive what I sent ; that I had better reserve my scanty resources for myself. “ I beg you to go and see your sister ;” while pointing out to me a place of refuge, she thought, doubtless, that my presence there would prevent the sale of Les Echerolles ; that thus something would be saved for my father to fall back upon ; and that probably my youth might shield me from the hatred borne to my family. She had no hope of seeing me again, yet she sought to revive my

courage by giving me one ray of it. "I have asked to be again examined." And the box, which she bade me to return to-morrow!—She would have had me think that there was a morrow for her. I knew that there was none!

Lastly, she commended me to the kindness of our neighbours. My fate was the object of her deepest solicitude; and how painful to her must it have been to leave me thus alone! In the evening I heard some one weeping silently beside me; it was Madame de Bellecise! It was long before she sought to address to me any words of consolation, and this gentle compassion tended in some degree to soften my excessive distress. Those tears were worth far more than words. My courage failed at the prospect of my utter loneliness. I knew not where my father was, nor whether my brothers were still living. The life, which had been the guiding-star of mine, had been cut off; nothing now remained to me but tears, and those I could not shed.

Madame de Bellecise perceived it; she remained like a ministering angel beside me; and when her tears had softened my grief, and the state of statue-like tension, in which I had been for hours, gave way, and I was able to weep, my eyes sought hers to read in them the language of a heart which

bled in sympathy with mine, and I felt no longer alone. It seemed to me as if my aunt still spoke to me, though her gentle tones, her tears, her pitying eyes, reminded me yet of those dear ones. And when she asked me to follow her, I rose and did so willingly, that I might give way to my sorrow at her side. Madame Milanés also joined us. My situation seemed to affect her deeply, and she assured me of her friendship.

“Do you purpose seeking to rejoin your father?” said she to me. “I am acquainted with a family,” (she meant her own,) “which is going to Switzerland, and will readily take charge of you thither. You may, perhaps, find him there; and at any rate you can wait with them until you are able to rejoin him.” I refused this offer, for had I not even now received my aunt’s note, expressing her wish that I would return to my sister.

• “You see, Madam, it is not in my power.”

“Very well, Alexandrine, but if I can be of any service to you in your arrangements for your departure, do not hesitate to employ me.”

After the loss of my aunt there was nothing which could add to my distress, except my ignorance of all that which had preceded her last moments. Thanks to Providence, some details

subsequently reached me, which will not be out of place here.

I am indebted for them to M. de Révéroni, who, thanks to very influential protection, was withdrawn from the *bad vault* but a few hours before the execution. He was with the ladies, and like them preparing for death; God in His mercy granting them the assistance of a priest destined to share their fate.

They spent the night previous to their execution in prayer, humbly confessed their faults, and asked for God's grace to enable them to meet their deaths courageously. Their resignation and pious fervour were such that M. de Révéroni, himself a husband and father, grieved to be withdrawn from amongst them, the hope of life did not appear to him comparable to so glorious a death. He had consummated his sacrifice, and already earth had faded from his view. He bade a sad farewell to these travellers towards heaven, and then turned wearily back to the toils of this world.

He has frequently said that this scene would never be effaced from his memory, and that words were feeble to express the peace of that solemn night. How I longed to hear the account from his own lips, but I sought him in vain.

The same holy calm which had reigned in the

gloomy vault accompanied them to the scaffold. When the door of their dungeon was thrown open for the last time, they were seen to come forth with the greatest tranquillity. They listened in profound silence while their sentence was read, and descending from the Hôtel de Ville with equal serenity, they walked with a firm step to the place of execution. When they reached the foot of the guillotine, the priest gave them his blessing. My aunt was the first to ascend it. She was followed by Mademoiselle Ollier, who desired to address the people, but this was not permitted. Afterwards came the rest. The man of God was the last to die. Like a faithful shepherd, he did not enter into his rest until he had seen his sheep beyond the reach of danger.

And did not God receive into His glory the souls of those who for love of Him had endured all their sufferings in the genuine spirit of charity? and while bitter tears were bursting from my eyes, sobs from my bleeding heart, was not heaven opened to *them*? had they not attained to all knowledge? had they not already received their reward?

Such a death is indeed glorious—Thou, oh Lord! didst not esteem me worthy of it! I was destined for a longer journey, that I might have

the opportunity of meditating on Thy ways, and being fortified by fresh trials. Alas ! I was often weary of my calamities, and dared to ask, why all the happiness of life was lavished upon so many others, while I was destined to live on unheeded in loneliness and poverty ; but the Lord at length deigned to draw me back to Him, and to teach me His counsel, and then I perceived that many a misfortune may be in truth a blessing. Many are the souls who have been purified by suffering in the depths of those gloomy dungeons, where He caused the torch of faith to shine before their eyes. Absorbed in the concerns of business or of pleasure, the greater number of them had forgotten the way of salvation until these trials were sent to reclaim them. Then they acknowledged their errors, and esteemed themselves highly favoured in being permitted to testify their repentance by their endurance of “ the light affliction which is but for a moment.” While even the wicked, whose yoke of iron was an instrument in His hands for the chastisement of His people, are not cut off from the hope of appeasing Him by the repentance of the heart. By how many crimes is purchased the possession of the transitory treasures of earth ! Already many of those who sought to usurp power

over their fellow-men have disappeared from amongst them, and are despoiled of the empty riches which were the price of innocent blood. They flourished but a day, and I may exclaim with the Psalmist: "I went by, and lo! they were gone: their place was nowhere to be found."

CHAPTER III.

Life is before ye ! from the fated road
Ye cannot turn : then take ye up your load.
Not yours to tread, or leave, the unknown way,
Ye must go o'er it, meet ye what ye may.
Gird up your souls within you to the deed,
Angels and fellow-spirits bid you speed !

FANNY KEMBLE.



A DAY OF SOLITUDE—VISIT FROM M. ALEXANDRE—DISTRESS OF
CANTAT—HE TAKES ME WITH HIM TO FONTAINE—KINDNESS
OF THE CHAZIERES FAMILY.

THE next day I withdrew into a little parlour adjoining my room, and spent the whole of the day in complete solitude. The keeper respected my grief, and had discretion enough not to intrude upon me. Absorbed in reflections of which God alone was witness, I wept before Him over

my objectless existence ; life was now to me a dreary blank, and my spirit would not cleave to earth. With my aunt I had lost the object of my care, my hopes, my fears. She had been my first thought on awakening, my last on lying down to rest. What was left me now to do here below ? Without her, all around me was a desert, and my spirit pined to be re-united to hers in heaven.

I had kept no account of time ; and no sound had been able to arouse me from my deep and solemn meditations. Struggling with my overwhelming grief, I was endeavouring to rise above it and to master it, when my door opened, and old Forêt entered, followed, to my great consternation, by a republican guard, who, dismissing the keeper with an imperious gesture, I found myself alone with—M. Alexandre !

“What !” I exclaimed, “is that you ? And where is my father ?”

“I do not know where he is at this moment,” replied he. “We were arrested near the frontier, the authenticity of our papers being suspected. While the people who should have examined them were being fetched, your father won over the man left in charge of us, by giving him his watch ; he suffered us to escape through the window, and we were so fortunate as to reach Fontaine again after

a very short absence. Mine had not even been perceived, so I resumed my office. Your father has just set out again alone, Bourdin went off in another direction, and Charmet remains at home. Being warned that I had been denounced to the authorities of the town district, I am come with all speed to have my real passport verified by the authorities of the country district, before the denunciation becomes known and I am exposed to dangers even greater than those I have already encountered. I am going away, and have taken leave of the worthy Chazières, but I promised them to inquire if you had still any bread," (in their kindness they had several times sent me a supply). "If you want some, let them know, and they will bring it you."

"Oh no ! I want nothing more," replied I. "My aunt died yesterday."

"And you," resumed he, quickly, "what shall you do ? what will become of you ?"

"I shall await my fate ; I know that this night there are to be several domiciliary visits, and I shall be arrested."

"Indeed !"

"Yes, I have been warned of it : the prisons are becoming empty, and they wish to re-fill them."

“And you would stay?”

“Yes.”

“You would stay quietly here and wait for them?”

“Yes, I have no other wish; I even long for the time to come.”

“This will not do,” said he; “you had better return with me. I will go back immediately, and take you to Mother Chazières.”

“No, leave me; I will not seek to fly from my destiny. I wish to die; I wish to follow her. What have I now to do upon earth? I long for death.”

“But I will not permit it,” said he, in a tone of determination. “Doubtless Providence has sent me hither for the performance of a sacred duty, and I will obey its mandates. I am the only person here who knows your father, and the last who saw him; I assume his authority, and in his name I command you to fly from the death for which you long. How do you know that you would even have the privilege of dying? Who can tell what fate might be reserved for you in the prison, whither you would go? You provided for your aunt; but who will provide for you? Would you reckon upon interested services, which sometimes even failed your aunt? You must live for your father and for your

brothers, whom some day you will see again. In their name I summon and command you to get up and follow me."

He spoke with authority, but I still resisted. "I have no desire to live; leave me; perhaps even now I am alone in the world. My path is clear before me: Heaven points it out, and I will follow it."

"Well then," resumed M. Alexandre, "I will not leave you; and you will have my death to answer for."

On hearing these words I rose. "You have conquered," said I; "let us go. I have no right thus to assume the disposal of your fate."

I had no sooner consented, than Cantat entered.

"I am taking away your mistress," said he; "she will not sleep here to-night."

At this intelligence Cantat burst into tears. "What! are you taking her away?" cried she. "And what will become of us? They will come to-night to arrest her; and if they do not find her, they will throw *us* into prison. Leave her with us!"

I cannot describe the expression of M. Alexandre's countenance. At first it was that of astonishment, as if he had not understood her; then of anger, which he could scarcely control.

“Wretched woman ! is that all you think of ? You would sacrifice the last of your master’s family, the last who remains to you ! You, who should think yourself happy to give your life to save her ! But you are not deserving of such a fate ; you are unworthy to die for her.”*

In his just displeasure, he had raised his voice, and poor Cantat’s tears had been at once checked by this resolute man, before whom she stood petrified with fear. It seemed as if her consciousness were suspended, so motionless did she stand, without word or sign.

Next came the keeper : he had not heard what M. Alexandre said ; but the loud tones of his voice had reached him, and he came to inquire into the cause of the dispute. M. Alexandre left him no time to ask a question, but informed him in a tone of authority, that he was the bearer of an order to take me away that moment. Old Forêt, feeling a profound respect for the republican uniform, bowed his consent, and opened the door for us. That which had happened convinced

* The reader should not judge Cantat as severely as did M. Alexandre. She was a good woman in the main, and fond of me. I do not think she knew herself what she was saying at that moment of terror.

me that there was no time to be lost, and I went out, scarcely knowing what I was about.

All this passed so rapidly, that I am convinced we misunderstood Cantat's meaning, and that she had no time to set us right. It is but justice to say here, that the poor girl, although she had an unpleasant temper, had not a bad heart, nor have I the least reason to look upon her as an enemy. I often think that she took M. Alexandre for what he appeared to be; and that while trying to persuade him to leave me at liberty, she herself intended to conceal me from the search that we dreaded. I confess that, not wishing to put her to shame, I have never questioned her concerning that moment, whether it were of error or of delirious fear.

I went away, leaving behind me, with regret, the only creature that had remained faithful to me, but which I durst not take with me—my little dog, whose honest eyes and affectionate caresses had welcomed my return every evening to my cheerless fireside. It was a real happiness to me to be subsequently reunited to this last remaining faithful little friend. She had been a favourite both with my father and my aunt; she was like a relic of them, and my farewell glance said to her: "They loved you."

I proceeded rapidly along with my guide, whose uniform served us a passport; and having passed the gates of the town without the slightest difficulty, we soon found ourselves free, and in the open country. We had felt it of importance to make our exit as speedily as possible, because it was late for going out, and our doing so at undue hours might have excited attention. It soon grew very dark, and a fine soaking rain was falling. Our progress was rendered slow and fatiguing, by the impossibility of distinguishing anything; and nothing but M. Alexandre's intimate acquaintance with the road, could have enabled us to find it, amidst the pitchy darkness which protected our flight.

For my part, I gave myself up with full confidence to the care of this generous man, walking cautiously, and seeking to avoid making any noise, or meeting any one. In the silence of this nocturnal march, I recalled to mind all the sad events which had led me to wander thus at night, amongst the fields, young as I was, and alone with a young man, and a comparative stranger.

We arrived very late at Fontaine. The excellent people with whom I sought refuge, received me cordially. M. Alexandre informed them of

my calamity, and commended me to their care. They wept with me, and welcomed me with all the delicacy which is natural to minds of a high order. Half the night was spent in relating our several histories. M. Alexandre's return was a cause of joy to the whole family, and a good fire and supper restored us from our fatigues. Having long talked over the miseries of the present, and those which the morrow had in store—of the gloomy past and the dreaded future, I bade good-night to my guide, and holding out my hand to him, I sought to express my gratitude, but had no words to do so. "I shall see you to-morrow," I said; but I saw him no more. He had set out again before day-break. I do not know whether he be still living, or where may be his abode—never since then have I heard his name.

When I awoke the next day, I was bitterly disappointed to hear that he was gone. I felt guilty of ingratitude, for I had thanked him so feebly, so insufficiently. At the peril of his own life he had saved me in my orphan state, protected me in my loneliness and weakness. Surely so noble an act would be rewarded by the protection of Heaven; and in my prayers I failed not to implore it for him.

CHAPTER IV.

All was ended now, the hope, and the fear, and the sorrow,
All the aching of heart, the restless unsatisfied longing,
All the dull deep pain and constant anguish of patience !

LONGFELLOW.

So farewell hope, and with hope farewell fear !

MILTON.



I REMAIN THREE WEEKS AT FONTAINE—MAGDALEN'S AFFECTION
FOR ME—MADAME MILANÉS—HER KINDNESS—A PASSPORT—
FAREWELL TO MY FRIENDS—I SET OUT ON MY RETURN TO
LES ECHEROLLES.

ON the very night of my escape, the authorities came to arrest me. But what was become of me ? The keeper replied, that I had already been arrested about six o'clock by a republican guard. "And to what prison has she been taken ?" "I do not know." And they went away. Her mind thus set at ease by finding that they were satisfied with this answer, and

that my safety did not endanger hers, Cantat kept my secret.

The number of the arrests made on such nights, made it impossible to ascertain the truth very quickly, and to gain time was a great point. If the poor thing had been taken to prison, I do not know how long her courage and discretion would have lasted. I hope, however, for her own sake, that she would have derived strength from her misfortunes. But, notwithstanding M. Alexandre's secrecy, concerning the place he was taking me to, she might easily have guessed that I was at Fontaine, whither St. Jean afterwards came to pay me a visit.

I spent three weeks with these excellent people, whose kindness never for a moment failed. I cannot to this day recal to mind without emotion, the delicacy of the attentions which they lavished upon me. It was only upon my own repeated entreaties that they suffered me to share their meals. They urged that I was not accustomed to their hours nor to their food ; but how could I retain *any* habits by this time ? The excellent Magdalen was unremitting in her tender care of me. She was always warned in time when domiciliary visits were to be paid in the village, and would then conduct me through bye-ways, beyond

the limits of the Department, whence I did not return until after the departure of the commissioners. My preservation was no longer a secondary object with her. I was the person to be saved, the only one who now engrossed her affectionate solicitude.

The condition of rest and leisure into which I suddenly found myself transferred, seemed intolerable to me. I had no cares now to occupy me, no one but myself to think of, and it seemed to me as if my life were bound by no ties. I was like a branch severed from the stem, and condemned to wither away. Under the influence of the profound melancholy which had now obtained the mastery over me, my sense of utter isolation awoke in me an eager desire to seek out my father. This desire grew into a vehement, almost morbid longing, by which even my anxiety to obey my aunt's last commands was in some degree shaken.

St. Jean and Cantat no sooner became acquainted with my feelings, than alarm at the idea of returning alone to Moulins made them employ all sorts of cunning devices to make me revert to my original intention. Whether it were that they respected the wishes of my aunt, or that they feared lest they should be punished if they did

not bring me back with them, they did all in their power to prevent my escaping from them. Through their means I was informed of the ill-usage to which many women had been exposed on the frontiers; and unable to make up my mind to risk such treatment, I abandoned the plan altogether.

I learnt afterwards that I had been deceived by them, and that the stories which had so alarmed me were entirely of their own invention. It was Magdalen who informed me of this, at the moment of my departure, when her fear of the dangers to which I might be exposed in my native place made her regret having seconded their wishes. It is, however, possible that they may have thought this plan the best and most beneficial for me. At all events, I can now excuse their having left no means untried of inducing me to adopt it.

These timorous spirits were the instruments in the hand of Providence to recal me to my duty, and I prepared to follow them. I confess, however, that it was not without alarm that I anticipated my return to a neighbourhood where the hatred of which my father had been the object made me fear the treatment to which I might be exposed, and my uncer-

tainty on this subject increased the agitation of my mind.

The life I led at this time was very tranquil, and might have been happy, but for the painful recollections and bitter regrets which filled my heart. Every day, at the evening meeting, I used to read aloud the "Lives of the Saints." Towards midnight, Mother Chazières said a prayer, and then the pious assemblage dispersed. Such a life was very soothing to my spirit; I felt that I had sisters with whom to pray. Every Sunday I read the prayers from the mass-book to the assembled family; and all kneeling, we fervently implored repentance for the guilty, and consolation for the afflicted. The simple Peter joined in our prayers with all his might, and prayed with his heart, if not with his understanding; and would Heaven require more? His humility was sincere, and his intelligence sufficed to enable him religiously to keep such secrets as were unavoidably confided to him.

In obeying the last directions of my aunt, I was about to enter upon a most undesirable course of life, to live alone, to regulate my own actions, and be responsible for my own words. It was a fearful and perilous prospect of liberty. I should have no guide, perhaps no friends. How great

is the wisdom which conceals from us the future ; for were it revealed to us, who would have strength to endure the burden ? Could I have foreseen the accumulation of sorrows which the coming years would heap upon my head, I think I must have returned to Lyons, and entreated for death upon the scaffold as a boon. But God, who knew my weakness; supported me in the midst of my misery ; and may He pardon the rebellious thought.

I can say nothing of my own character. I was under the dominion of external events, and acted upon the impulses given by them, rather than upon my own. At once firm and timorous, confiding and reserved, my loneliness caused me to repress my feelings within my own heart ; to speak of them to those who could not understand them, would have seemed to me a profanation. For the same reason I kept my opinions to myself ; there is often safety in silence. Since then I have heard my courage lauded, and have been astonished at it. Could I have acted otherwise ? I was swept along by the force of circumstances, and merely followed the path they pointed out :

I was easily deceived by an appearance of sincerity ; for, notwithstanding my misfortunes, I

found it difficult to believe in evil, or rather I greatly felt the need of believing in good. Having been undeceived concerning St. Jean and Cantat, I was sensible of a repugnance towards them which I could not conquer ; while at the same time, the old habits of my childhood made me feel a kind of deference for their admonitions. The necessity of showing a confidence in them which I did not experience, was torture to me. This opposition between my feelings and my situation now appeared to me almost the only thing which it was difficult to endure ; for a feeling, which I dare not call resignation, but rather indifference, had by degrees taken possession of me, and freed me from all anxiety on my own behalf.

Nothing could be more wholesome, or more fortunate for me in the state in which I was, than my stay at Fontaine. In spite of my utter uselessness, my isolation, and my ignorance of the fate in store for me, I felt it a comfort to be with Magdalen, and by degrees I took the place of Mademoiselle de Sauriac in her heart. My position was well calculated to excite her interest. She never left me ; and seeking every means in her power to divert me from my grief, she became every day more dear to me. Mother Chazières for her part studied my tastes, strove to gratify them,

and would always have at her table some greater delicacy for me than they themselves partook of. My remonstrances were unheeded. "You are not accustomed to live as we do," would she reply, and no change was effected. Lastly, her husband showed me every attention of which he was capable, and was evidently touched by my position. I was now alone in his house, and as he did not think my age such as to endanger his safety, he was always in his best humour.

St. Jean, who had easily divined my hiding-place, soon came to see me, bringing with him my dear little dog, Coquette. It was the first moment of pleasure I had experienced, and I was touched by the consideration which had procured it for me. The delight of my faithful little friend was no less than mine. She loved me, was faithful to me, and was the only creature that belonged to me. One must have lost all, as I had, to feel the value of such caresses ; it was a link which united me to my past life, to all that had once been mine. She seemed to me to bear the traces of the beloved hands of my father and aunt, who had loved and caressed her ; and to be even grateful for their kindness. How many memories of the past were restored to me with her ! I wept at the sight of her, as she seemed to recal to me all that I had

lost. She appeared to understand me, and I no longer felt alone.

St. Jean informed me that the seals had been removed at his and Cantat's request, to enable them to obtain their effects, in accordance with the order they had procured for the purpose. He next informed me that their intention was to profit by the opportunity of a carrier from Moulins, who had brought a load of wooden clogs to Lyons, and was going back empty.

"And I am come here," he added, "to ask what you mean to do?"

"I shall accompany you," replied I. "I have neither the will nor the power to act otherwise."

In fact, since I had taken a firm resolution to obey my aunt, my alarm and agitation had in a great measure subsided. I charged him to go to Madame Milanés, to inform her of my approaching departure, and to ask her advice as to the means of obtaining a passport.

He soon returned in order to take me to her, without giving Citizen Fôret notice of my presence at Lyons. I shall never forget the affectionate kindness, the almost maternal tenderness of Madame Milanés, or the agreeable impression produced upon me by her attentions, her language and her manners. I returned at once to all my old habits

as if to old friends, and my eyes filled with tears at the thought of all that I had lost, and could never regain.

To obtain a passport, a certificate from a section was required. I could not ask for one from my own section without great danger ; it was therefore decided that an assignat for a hundred francs should be employed in its stead, a substitution readily tolerated by the person whose office it was to deliver passports. The conduct of the negotiation was entrusted to Madame Milanés' maid, one of the most intelligent persons I ever met with. The man having been forewarned, I went with her to the office, and put into his hands a paper which he seemed to read with great attention, then putting it carefully into a drawer, he handed me my passport, in which I was described as an embroideress—a character befitting any woman—for it was necessary to have some trade.

I supped with Madame Milanés, and slept in her room. As I was undressing, she noticed a red riband fastened to my stays.

"What have you got there, Alexandrine?" asked she.

"My father's cross of the order of St. Louis."

"Are you mad, my child? do you mean that you have always worn it?"

“To be sure! I have nothing left but this cross, and I mean to keep it for him.”

“And when you went to the prison?”

“I wore it just the same. Did not he pay for it with his blood?”

“Alexandrine, pray give it up to me. If you should be searched, you would endanger your life, and, perhaps, lose it; you cannot in reason expose yourself to such a risk.”

It cost me much to yield to her wishes; still I could not contend against her prudence, her friendship, and above all the gratitude I owed her; and I gave up my treasure to her. I had besides carefully concealed in my stays some papers which had been entrusted to me by my father and my aunt, who both forgot that in a moment of urgent alarm, they had given them to me to hide. I could think of no safer place than my stays, and there they remained. Amongst them were several blank signatures of M. de Précý which he had entrusted to my father, for what purpose I know not. These, however, I had destroyed long ere this, being aware of the danger that his name bore with it. Having no longer the blessing of receiving their directions, I had faithfully observed those already given. But all these I was obliged to sacrifice to the will of my prudent protectress,

which was so much the more painful to me, that it was one more object of my care of which I was deprived. I grew poorer every day.

The next day I went to the Provisional Commission to have my passport examined and signed. A——, late prefect of the college at Moulins, was charged with this office. He looked at me fixedly for a long time.

“How long have you been an embroideress?” said he.

“Ever since I have been able to work as well as my mother,” I replied.

He did not say another word.

Returning from the office of the Provisional Commission, I prepared to go back to Fontaine. Our parting was a very affectionate one, for Madame Milanés was much touched by my fate. She herself was on the eve of leaving Lyons to rejoin her children, whom she had long since sent to Switzerland beyond the reach of danger, to the care of one of her sisters who had lived there ever since the emigration began.

When we parted, Madame Milanés gave me a little parcel of slightly singed assignats.

“Here,” said she, “are some assignats which were saved from the fire into which your unfortunate townsmen threw all that they possessed,

before their death. A few of them were saved, and I give them to you as the person having the most claim to them, being a native of the same place."

Her delicacy in offering me this assistance went straight to my heart, and very brief reflection sufficed to show me that she had but profited by this report to relieve my necessity; for how could these assignats have come into her hands? I called down the blessings of Heaven upon her, and again feeling very lonely I took the way to Fontaine, under the escort of St. Jean, there to remain until the time came for my departure.

Magdalen could not bear to part with me, nor to see me go. She liked neither St. Jean nor Cantat, and informed me of their intrigues to dissuade me from remaining, or going to Switzerland.

"And you are going with such people as those!" cried she. "As long as I thought it was for your good I held my tongue, but they have no fears except for themselves. Stay with us, we love you, and we will take care of you."

"I must obey my aunt, Magdalen."

"But your aunt did not suppose that you would

be in danger in your wicked province ; she was anxious for your good ; they only want to take you there lest they should be punished."

I could reply only by tears to the arguments of this admirable girl. Her affection touched me deeply, but could not shake my resolution.

"Well then," said she, "if you should be unhappy, write to me. I will find means to reach you, and I will rescue you, and bring you back with me ; as long as I live no harm shall befall you, and you shall wait here for your father's return."

Excellent Magdalen ! doubtless she would have done it—she was fully capable of it ; but I could now only weep with her over a separation which deprived me of so true a friend. I passed a few more peaceful days at Fontaine ; days of calm after the tempest, such as renew our strength to encounter fresh calamities.

Everything in this lowly retreat pleased and attracted me. I regretted everything. The little Dorothy, though as discreet as a grown-up woman, had all the gaiety of her age, and often forced a smile from me. Peter saw that I was unhappy, and he too strove in his own way to direct me. His powers were limited it is true, but having once noticed that I laughed at seeing him jumping

about with Coquette, he was in the habit whenever he saw me looking, as he thought, too melancholy, of beginning to dance in his peculiar fashion with steps and attitudes so grotesque that I found it impossible to keep my countenance. Pleased at seeing me laugh, he would redouble his efforts, and nothing but fatigue would make him leave off. I was touched by the kindness of his intention, and felt an interest in the poor idiot, who had sense enough never to commit an indiscretion, and whose prudence far exceeded that of many people in the full possession of all their faculties.

Cantat and St. Jean's affairs being at length settled, they came to fetch me, and I bade farewell to the good Chazières. Our parting was a very sad one. Never was a step taken of greater importance, for its influence extended over the whole of my after life.

I returned to my aunt's apartment, where I passed a very sad night. The keeper, seeing me provided with a regular passport, never thought of opposing my departure, which besides was entirely to the advantage of his interests. He was not sorry for the removal of the only person who had any claim to the property under his care,

and which he had already accustomed himself to look upon as his own. They say that with the assistance, or at the instigation of his wife, he stole great part of the goods. He perished together with her at a subsequent period of reaction.

I went to bid farewell to Madame de Soulligné, whose daughter was my friend, and of about my own age. Their keeper admitted me to see them in consideration of my approaching departure. M. de Soulligné had been executed, and they hoped soon to obtain permission to quit Lyons in order to retire to a little property which Madame de Soulligné possessed near Sens, and of which they gave me the direction. These farewells were very painful. It was so doubtful whether we should ever meet again. For my part, I felt as if I were walking towards a precipice.

I went up to Madame de Bellecise whom I honoured as a saint, and loved as a mother. She wept over me and blessed me. I ventured to ask her where was her daughter, the object of my intense admiration; for I could imagine no young woman who could surpass Félicité de Bellecise.

“She is saved,” was the reply.

“ God be thanked !” I exclaimed ; “ may He one day restore her to you, and preserve her friendship to me.”

Old M. de Bellecise joined his earnest good wishes for me to those of his wife, and I left them. No doubt they felt much compassion for me.

Early the next day I got into the clog-maker’s cart, and quitted the ill-fated town where I had lost all that I held dear, taking with me a little boy of four or five years of age, named Maine, whose father had been guillotined, and whose mother, having fallen into poverty, was now sending him to the care of an uncle who was a bookseller at Moulins. The sight of a child younger and more unfortunate than myself, made me feel how much I had still left more than he ; I was going to rejoin a sister, a nurse whom I knew, and to live in the house in which I was born ; and might perhaps meet there some of my old friends.

My journey was a sad one ; the tone of my companions’ conversation, and their abruptness of speech had never struck me so much before, but they felt no restraint upon them now. In Cantat’s bag I perceived some gowns of my aunt’s ; she told

me that she had given them to her ; she had literally interpreted my aunt's letter dictated in a widely different spirit. I kept silence, for I began to understand how useless it is to complain.

CHAPTER V.

Have I not hideous death within my view,
Retaining but a quantity of life
Which bleeds away, even as a form of wax
Resolveth from his figure 'gainst the fire? .
What in the world should make me now deceive,
Since I must lose the use of all deceit?

KING JOHN.

RETURN TO LES ECHEROLLES — OUR NURSE — SEQUESTRATION —
INTERROGATORY — LIFE AT LES ECHEROLLES—MADEMOISELLE
MELON—CHANGE OF ABODE.

It was a lovely morning when I arrived at Les Echerolles—a lovely morning in the beginning of May, of the year 1794. And yet, how deserted and sad did everything appear to me! Nobody expected me, but I was received with the most sincere joy by my old nurse, like a lost child whom she had never hoped to see again. Next day, my

travelling companions set off again for Moulins,* and I found myself greatly relieved in mind—the species of deceit in which I had detected them, having inspired me with a constant uneasiness which made their presence oppressive to me.

From the time that I was forced to live with people whom I mistrusted, I acquired the habit of repressing my feelings, and concealing my thoughts at the bottom of my heart—a custom which sometimes answered very well, but which too often deprived me of the pleasures of sympathy, and of the benefits I might have derived from good advice.

Oh! how happy is she whose childhood flows quietly away, surrounded by love, under the care of a tender and vigilant mother, whose hand supports and guides her tottering steps, whose experience enlightens her dawning intellect, and whose heart breathes her own virtues into that of her child, and by inspiring her with the love of God, dissipates her fears and strengthens her faith!

* They took little Maine back with them. Truth compels me to acknowledge that they had both of them many good qualities, though their reciprocal antipathy occasioned us a thousand annoyances. I must forgive them everything, however, as it was very hard upon them to lose the savings of so many years; and for this they never reproached me either by word or look.

All these blessings were denied to me ; but it was only as I increased in years, and discovered their value that I became conscious of my own numerous faults and failings in consequence of this privation.

I arrived at Les Echerolles full of mistrust of everybody, and of myself also. I was conscious of being better brought up than those around me, which made me feel awkward for them, so that I was in fear and trembling lest the difference should be imputed to me as a crime ; and a restraint I had never before felt, became habitual to me.

The remembrance of the days I had once passed in this beloved spot with my own family, made the present still more bitter. A forsaken child, without parents or friends !—how pitiful must my lot have appeared to every really compassionate heart !

I loved my nurse dearly, but yet my confidence in her was shaken by the opinions she had announced at the opening of the Revolution. Her hatred of the abuses which had crept into the old government made her think she saw the dawn of her country's happiness in the changes which were taking place, and she applauded them with an ardour which was ever present to my mind, and

cast a shadow over the unvarying affection which she showed me. The intolerance which is natural to youth, troubled my judgment, and deceived my heart. I thought her guilty, because she had made one mistake,* and her advice had no longer any weight with me. Nevertheless, I felt that her love for me was unchanged; and I was soon compelled to acknowledge that there existed few nobler minds than hers—few warmer hearts, and that mine owed her the most unbounded gratitude. Necessary as she was to my sister's existence, and devoted to her, she seemed to live only for the sake of bestowing her tenderest cares upon her. I cannot even count up all the services she rendered us, or the endless resources we found in her zeal and attachment. Long since cured of an error which had arisen from her love of justice, she execrated the revolutionists and their crimes, and felt the hatred they deserved as warmly as she had once appreciated their fancied merits. How glad I am to be able to render this testimony to her memory, and here to acknowledge how much I owe her, and thus, by making my feelings public, to endeavour to repair the wrongs of which I may have been guilty towards her.

* I have since found that the world often judges as the little girl did in such matters.

The court-yard appeared to me one vast solitude, as my wretched little cart drove up to the steps before the house. I got down. How silent was everything ! Only a year and a half before, I had left that spot in a comfortable carriage, sitting by the side of my aunt, and surrounded by every care and attention. And now, had I still a family ? My father, my brother, did they yet exist ? and might I hope ever to behold them again ? A shiver passed over me. If it had not been for my dread of any one discovering my feelings, and also of weakening myself by their indulgence, I could not have restrained the sorrow which wrung my heart ; but the intense fear I felt of giving way before unsympathizing eyes, made me vigorously swallow down the strong emotion which shook my firmness, and I did not shed a single tear as I re-entered my father's desolate and deserted mansion. I found my nurse entirely absorbed in the cares which my sister's situation required, and making it her own delight to shed a little sunshine over Odille's melancholy existence. Barbara, an excellent girl, who was in our service before our separation, helped her and waited on her faithfully. She too greeted me affectionately ; but my sister did not know me. Tears flowed silently from her eyes, which were fixed on me with a perfectly

vacant expression. The other inhabitants of Les Echerolles, with the exception of Vermière, my father's excellent gardener, gazed at me with more curiosity than interest.

I was soon established in the kitchen ; that is to say, it served us for a sitting-room. At night, I shared the narrow garret in which my sister, my nurse, and Barbara slept. The rest, they told us, was under sequestration. Nevertheless, this pretended sequestration did not prevent the farmers enjoying the use of it, and receiving their friends there. I could see the windows of my mother's room opened for strangers—that room whence I alone was excluded, though in former days it was there that I had known her—there that I had received her blessing and her last farewell—*there* that I had seen her die ! I alone might not open that sacred door ; banished into the kitchen of my father's house, I saw those act and speak as masters, who once—oh ! it was hard indeed !

Hardly had I set foot to the ground, when a messenger was sent off to Moulins to announce the important fact to the Revolutionary Committee. A child of fourteen years old, almost miraculously escaped from misery and massacre—this child, the unfortunate remnant of a detested family, had actually arrived !

The next morning, I was awakened at four o'clock. I must get up at once—such were the orders; and they were waiting for me. I went down into the garden, where I found a man named C——, formerly an apothecary, but now a member of the Revolutionary Committee. He was waiting for me in an avenue of cut hornbeams, which became the tribunal where I was to be interrogated.

“Where is your father?”

“I do not know.”

“Have you seen Pr cy?”

“No.”

“Had you no knowledge of the plotting going on in the infamous city of Lyons?”

“No.”

“Has no one ever spoken in your presence of the plans of the counter-revolutionists?”

“No.”

“Did your aunt never reveal them to you?”

“No.”

“Where are your brothers?”

“I do not know.”

Such was the general style of his questions and of my answers. The man was short and ugly, stared fixedly at me, and seemed to wish to penetrate my very thoughts. He questioned me for a long time,

twisting his queries into various shapes ; but I continued equally laconic in my replies. My nurse trembled for me, and prayed in silence.

C——, being unable to extract anything more from me, and provoked at being defeated by a child, ended by saying, in a loud and imperious voice :

“ Listen attentively to what I am going to tell you, and be obedient. You have the misfortune to belong to a family of traitors, and you must efface this stain, repair their crimes, and purify the bad blood which flows in your veins. You can only do so by serving the nation, and working for it. Work then for our soldiers, and above all denounce all traitors, and publish their crimes ; it is thus that you may redeem from infamy the name you bear, and serve the Republic faithfully.” My only answer was a bitter smile, and he departed at last, crying out again and again, “ Denounce them—denounce them !”

C——’s visit frightened my nurse extremely. The moment he was gone she said to me :

“ You must obey him, and work for them as he desired. I will send to Moulins and ask for shirts and waistcoats for the volunteers, that you may make them up, and send them in to the Committee.”

"Indeed, my dear, I cannot work for them," I replied.

"But did you not hear what he said?"

"I will not do the work."

"Alexandrine, you will add to your troubles."

"I will bear them ; but nothing on earth shall make me obey that man."

"At least you can make some lint?"

"No, I shall not do anything of the sort."

My poor nurse, deeply distressed at my obstinacy, set to work to make lint herself. I saw her also sewing away at shirts and waistcoats ; and I rather think she must have given me the credit of a share in her industry before the Revolutionary Committee, for I heard no more of them.

The mayor of the village arrived before long to inspect all the little possessions I had brought back with me. Each separate thing was unfolded, shaken out and carefully examined, to know if any rebellious proclamation could be concealed in it. A detailed account of everything was sent to the Committee. My nurse, with a degree of prudence of which I saw the wisdom, though I could not fully approve it, hid half of the few things I possessed, so that I had only one single gown to wear, and that being a bad one, I really suffered from it :

but my nurse constantly repeated to me, "You must *appear* poor." I used to tell her I did not wish to awaken pity; but her tender solicitude was alarmed at everything which she thought might possibly compromise me. I dreaded nothing so much myself, however, as exciting that sort of insulting pity, which, wounding my pride, was more difficult to bear than even the misfortunes which called it forth. Nevertheless, how truly I was deserving of compassion from the fate which then awaited me. But I myself was still ignorant of the disgrace intended for me, and did not learn until long after that which I am now going to relate.

After my interrogatory, the Committee began to deliberate what they should do with me. I was looked upon as a dangerous creature; bearing a name they detested, and coming as I did from a rebellious city, where very possibly I might have heard secrets which they dreaded my communicating to some one of my own party. For this reason they did not dare to put me in the prison where those I knew were confined; and besides, it would have been a happiness to find myself with relations or friends, and they only wished to humble me, and to punish me for the crimes of my family. The result of their deliberations was

a decree, which condemned me to be shut up in a prison called Le Dépôt. At its very name my blood runs cold still, in spite of the number of years that have passed since the time of which I am speaking.

The Dépôt was a prison reserved for unfortunate women of the worst class, who having added positive and heinous crimes to their habitual evil ways, would have been executed, if the want of accurate evidence had not impeded the passing of the sentence. It was there, in that polluted place, that I was condemned to dwell. Oh, my mother! your daughter was to inhale the corrupted air of that horrible abode. Did you behold her from your celestial dwelling place, and watch over her to protect her from such misery? Providence interposed to save me. The decree was not immediately carried into execution, and the delay gave time for repentance to enter into the heart of a man who had known me from my birth. He was our family doctor, M. Simard, who since the revolution had shown himself inimical to my father, and now took his seat as member of the Revolutionary Committee in the house where he had been, for many years, received as a friend; where he was about to condemn to infamy the child whom he had loved, tended and caressed, whose life he had even saved

more than once. He now pleaded for me, representing that my youth prevented my being dangerous, and that as long as the estate of Les Escherolles was not sold, I might as well remain there under the control of the municipal authorities and of the farmer Alix, who would be responsible for my appearance, so that the decree could be put into execution at any time that the Committee might think fit. He carried the day. May the protection he extended to the orphan, turn the scales in his favour in the balance of Eternal Justice!

I remained in ignorance of this new misfortune that was hanging over me, and I am grateful for the delicacy which prevented every one from telling me of it. My age would have concealed from me its full extent, but I should have understood enough to have felt in utter despair, had I been dragged away to that dreadful place.

My captivity was almost unperceived by me. Of course I was watched; but as no restraint was put upon my movements, I did not feel myself a prisoner. Besides I could not wish to be elsewhere, for having returned in obedience to my aunt's desire, her commands were more sacred and more binding on my movements, than the strongest guard, so that the wish to escape never entered my mind. Besides, how could I have used my liberty?

What reason had I to leave Les Echerolles? The friends of my family were either under constraint, or had fled from the country. No one dared mention my father's name, for fear of being compromised. Nobody had either the power or the will to protect me, for nobody enjoyed liberty of action for themselves. Madame de Grimauld, my mother's best friend, having learnt the state of destitution in which I had returned from Lyons, immediately sent me word that she was ready to share with me the wardrobe of her daughter, Josephine, my earliest and dearest playmate. I refused the offer; but was deeply touched by her kind remembrance of me.

I have since ascertained, that if the decree of the Revolutionary Committee had been executed, Madame de Grimauld would have come and shut herself up with me in the prison, leaving her daughter in the hands of a trusty friend; that is, if she could have obtained permission to do so, as she was already under arrest in her own house.

"I should have thought it," she said to me afterwards, very simply, "a duty that I owed to your mother's memory."

These few words contain a high panegyric on both these excellent women, united by a friendship

which death could not sever ; a hallowed inheritance, of which men could not deprive me. How great must have been my mother's virtues, to have acquired for her so devoted and faithful a friend ! Virtues which, after she had departed to her rest, still protected her deserted child.

Gifted with every good quality, Madame de Grimauld bore all the misery that her husband's wild conduct and bad temper inflicted upon her with the utmost dignity and patience. Never did she let one word of complaint escape her. Never did her eyes appear to seek an answering glance of compassion. She was so generally esteemed, that even the Jacobins felt an involuntary respect for her, and I am certain she would have had no difficulty in obtaining permission to share my captivity.

My existence at Les Echerolles now became very peaceful, and by degrees I felt less keenly the absence of events, and the cessation from all the stormy excitements of my life in Lyons. My ignorance of all that was going on in the world, left my mind in repose, and my days passed away easily, in a grave but calm monotony, which had a sort of charm peculiar to itself. Unable to roam through the apartments at will, I used to

wander about the large and beautiful gardens, which were full of memorials of my childhood.* I found there many things dear to my heart, and revelled in the recollections they brought home to me. Every bush, every plant, reminded me of something my father had said. I had seen him in every spot of the garden. From one high terrace, directing my eyes with his extended hand, he would often point out to me the villages and farms scattered amongst the vineyards of that smiling country. My gaze resting first on the green meadows extended at our feet, wanders on to the winding waters of the Allier, a noble river, rival of the Loire, which robs it of its name. Beyond, that pretty country-house, almost at the foot of our hill, belongs to a relation ;† here to the left rises that remarkable mountain with its round summit covered with clouds ; who would not know it from all others?‡ There again is my mother's little garden ; there I have many a time seen her watering her flowers, while she smiled at my childish gambols. The trees she

* These beautiful gardens no longer exist. The shrubberies have all been cut down, and the plough passed over the rest.

† M. Roy de la Chaise.

‡ The Puy de Dôme.

planted herself are still before my eyes. One only is missing: her own tree, which died the very year she was taken from us. The others, as if symbols of our destiny, vegetated feebly on, as if unable either to flourish or to die.

There was not one place there which had not a history attached to it, and did not speak to me of the bright days passed away, and of my childish games and pleasures. How distant did those days appear! The Revolution had made my fourteen years weigh upon me like a century. In truth, a century might not have brought more changes to Les Echerolles than had occurred there in eighteen months. The farmers who inhabited the buildings adjoining the house, had made their fortune rapidly, as often happened in those days of paper-money; and numerous guests daily seated at their table, profited by their good fortune. The shouts, drinking-songs, and noisy revellings, which often reached our ears as night advanced, and even till far into the morning, told us too plainly what kind of company they entertained, to help them both to acquire money and to spend it.

Never had fortune more fascinations than at this time; never had she proved more deceitful. It was so easy to get riches that every one ran after them. Every one wished to ascend a step;

to reach the rank and splendour of which the ancient families had been deprived ; and the most costly furniture was greedily bought at low prices, creating fresh wants for its possessors. Few of these easily-acquired fortunes lasted, for what was quickly gained was quickly spent.

My pen and my memory refuse to dwell upon that miserable period. It was for this then, oh, my mother ! that your child was born ; for whom your tender solicitude dictated such touching and holy counsels in that solemn hour when nothing earthly, save your children's good, had power to interest you ! And I dared not even enter the room where I received your dying blessing, where your last word softened and instructed my young heart ! But I must be forgiven for dwelling so often upon so natural a sorrow.

One of the great misfortunes of my life at Les Echerolles was the want of occupation. I had no materials to make myself clothes ; nor had I any books—and I was rarely allowed to procure one from my father's library. My time was dangerously unoccupied ; and this I tried to remedy by sometimes working for the peasants. One of them brought me a muslin handkerchief, and begged me to embroider it for her, which put this way of employing myself into my head. In ex-

change for my needle-work she gave me butter and eggs, and I profited by the lesson. My nurse made caps for the little children ; and so our table was supplied with cheeses, and even chickens. Once in the week we used to send for a piece of meat, which we paid for out of the small store of paper money I had brought with me ; the farmers gave us flour, of which our good Barbara made bread ; and Vermière, our faithful gardener, supplied me with vegetables.

I used to take my frugal repasts at the very kitchen table where formerly my father's numerous domestics had assembled ; but I would not have exchanged it for the more luxurious one, whence the sounds of noisy feasting so often saluted my ears. I had bread enough, and one who had often been without it knew how to appreciate such a blessing. I was no longer in dread of hunger—that magic word—that gigantic lever, with which the masses are so easily moved, and the effects of which are most often desolation and death. That hunger with which the leaders terrified the people of the affranchised town which was no longer called Lyons—that disastrous famine was talked of everywhere, where they wished to raise a rebellion. Paris has often seen these imaginary dearths scatter terror amongst the wretched population

enclosed within her walls, when distracted with fear they rushed in blind fury against those whom they were intended to destroy.

Luxuries which the people do not need were found in abundance ; but the bread for which they work in the sweat of their brow, which forms their chief subsistence, was taken from them, whenever their anger was desired.

When a friend invited another to dinner, in these strange times he constantly desired him to bring his own bread ; and even at large parties, a most miscellaneous collection of bits of bread of all shapes and hues has been often seen ; each guest having brought a piece in his pocket.

I spent several months in the greatest tranquillity ; and nothing troubled the uniformity of my life, till a sudden thought arose amongst the people that they would plant a tree of liberty in front of the house. The farmer Alix pretended to be unable to oppose it any longer ; and soon I heard of little else but preparations for the ceremony which was to collect a great number of people together. They even showed me the cap prepared to crown the tree ; an indispensable ornament on these occasions. My nurse greatly alarmed at the whole plan, which she had hoped was entirely put a stop to, and fearing lest they should force

me to attend it, began to sound me on the subject.

“Do you know that they are really going to plant a tree of liberty?” she inquired.

“Yes, I do; but what is that to me?”

“Why, really—”

“Well!”

“Well, may you not have to attend the ceremony?”

“Have to attend it!” I exclaimed. “What could I do there?”

“Why,” she continued, “it is to be at the very gate of Les Echerolles, and the people will perhaps insist on it.”

“I shall not go.”

“They will try to make you take a part—dance round the tree, perhaps—in short, do as they do.”

“I will not go. I may be dragged there by force, but I will never appear willingly at such a scene. I will neither dance, nor sing, nor kiss their tree.”

“Have pity upon me at least, Alexandrine! Do not excite their anger. It will cost you your life.”

“I would rather die than humble myself to such indignities. I am not afraid of death!”

She immediately hastened to M. Alix, to inform him of my dangerous obstinacy. Having lost all hope of inducing me to change my mind, she implored him to use every effort to defer this dreaded festival; and this she, at length, succeeded in obtaining. I, nevertheless, was convinced that it would take place very soon; and on leaving my nurse, I went and cut off all my beautiful hair, to save the executioner the trouble. I have since heard of several young ladies who, hoping to save their parents' lives by it, were weak enough to take a part in these Bacchanalian games, and lost themselves without obtaining the boon for which they paid so dearly. To gain time was much.

The death of Robespierre soon after changed the destiny of France. Executions daily diminished, and hope reappeared in that unhappy country—so many horrors had disgusted the people themselves, who now really desired repose. I learned these tidings with thankfulness, as it was now said that peace would be restored. A vague hope of happiness and security seemed combined with this great event, though I was far from understanding all its consequences. I saw no one who could enlighten me, and no visible change took place in my daily existence. Terror

still reigned everywhere—people dared not believe that the tyrant's power was at an end—egotism, self-interest, and expectation of coming events, affected people in different ways. Some regretted their little share of power, while others doubted whether the hydra-headed monsters were indeed for ever banished.

The inhabitants of Les Echerolles shared in the general agitation, and all sought to shape out the course of future events, if I may so express it, according to their own wants and wishes, planning the future as it pleased them best. I felt humbled and mortified by all who approached me, for the cupidity of the poorer class was now fearlessly revealed to view since the terror that pressed upon all had diminished.

I remember one day, when I was sitting in the garden with my sister and my nurse, the labourers belonging to my father's farm came and stretched themselves to rest on the turf near the spot where we were seated. They quietly continued their conversation, which, it seems, had turned upon the division of the property of all those who had emigrated—a vain hope with which the people had been fed since the beginning of the troubles, and which they still cherished. Those people loved me, and often pitied me, and yet each one

of them said without scruple before his master's daughter: "I will content myself with the share I have now, without aspiring to more." One of them was my foster-father into the bargain.

The reaction which had crushed Robespierre soon restored a milder government, to the great displeasure of a certain great personage, who expected much from Robespierre's services. The prisons were opened, the greater part of the prisoners set at liberty; people breathed freely once again; a new life seemed beginning.

My own fate felt the influence of it, and was changed in a totally unexpected manner.

My father had an old first-cousin, a Mademoiselle Melon, who had passed her eightieth year, and lived in the country in the utmost retirement, thanks to which, and to the care of M. Bonvent, her man of business (who understood revolutionary tactics well), she had escaped all the disturbances of the times. She owed this exemption to the extreme pains he had taken to keep her out of sight, and whatever method he may have used he certainly succeeded.

Mademoiselle Melon belonged to the old order of things by her rank, her fortune, and her way of life, as well as by her age. She had no idea of what was going on in the world, or of any of its

new-fangled ways, and every word she uttered might have cost her her life !

She was in one of her distant possessions, intent upon building a house on the estate, when the Revolution first broke out. M. Bonvent, who knew her energetic nature full well, immediately perceived all the dangers which threatened her, and left no stone unturned to keep her quiet in her remote seclusion. She consented to await there the return of tranquillity, and so a lodging was rather hastily prepared for her in one of the wings of her new house, a stable being converted into four rooms, which were habitable for a time at least, if things could not boast of much comfort, and in these she took up her abode with two of her women ; the others were scattered about in the vast out-buildings of the projected mansion.

Whilst Mademoiselle Melon made her arrangements, the Revolutionary Committee of the department of the Nièvre made them also, and chose to establish themselves in the house she had at Nevers ; so she was compelled to remain at L'Ombre. Every now and then, indeed, she would exclaim that she would one day go and drive out the rogues by dint of blows ; but as all these remarks were confined to her own fireside, the rogues did not much care. Besides, M. Bon-

vent, who was now sole possessor of part of his mistress's fortune, was inclined to make the pleasure last as long as possible, and succeeded in diverting the covetous eyes of the nation from her riches. Mademoiselle Melon meantime lived on dismally enough, but yet in safety, though suffering and death were very near her ; and as she neither saw company nor read the papers, she knew nothing of what was going on in the world.

Now it happened that one day, when she and M. Bonvent were dining together, she was told that a peasant demanded an immediate audience. Mademoiselle Melon desired that he might be shown in at once, but the man, whether from stupidity or shyness, did not clearly explain what he wanted. On being repeatedly desired to speak plain, he took courage, and said :

“ You know that now everybody is equal, and so I have come to put you in requisition.”

“ What is that ?” said Mademoiselle Melon, who did not in the least understand him.

“ I say, that now that we may exercise our rights freely, I put you in requisition.”

“ But what does that mean ?” she exclaimed, with some impatience.

“ It means that you are to become my wife.”

To hear this, to jump up and seize her walking-cane, and to let fall a shower of blows on this strange wooer, was the affair of a moment with Mademoiselle Melon; and while the man timidly retreated, she struck her hardest, repeating :

“ Ah ! you wish to marry me, do you ? I’ll serve you out ! ”

The astounded peasant, with many bows, sidled backwards to the door, muttering :

“ Well, citizen, they told me— ”

“ Aha ! I am citizen now, am I ? Wait a bit ! Here’s more for that ! ” and the foolish fellow departed in great disgust.

Mademoiselle Melon long brooded over her wrath, and it is said that M. Bonvent was not a little amused ; but in many of the departments Jacobins really compelled rich heiresses to marry them in the same sort of way.

I am still ignorant how Mademoiselle Melon became acquainted with my sad position, and the misfortunes of my family. She had spent many years in her youth with my grandmother, and felt in duty bound to show her gratitude to her grandchild. It was, then, from this relation, who had never seen me, and whose very name I hardly knew, that I received a very great proof of interest

and kindness, considering the state of affairs, for though people's minds were calmer, the same persons remained in power.

Mademoiselle Melon, moved by the generous desire to soften my hard fate, sent M. Bonvent to Commissioner Noel, who was going the round of his department, to inquire from him if he did not think that, considering her age, her solitude, and the delicate state of her health, she had a strong claim to the care of her great-niece, who was living afar off, alone, and under arrest. Citizen Noel, being fully informed of the state of the case, replied that my early youth would make it possible to try this plan, but that her request must be addressed to the Revolutionary Committee at Moulins.

As soon as she received this answer, she sent off her man of business there to represent her wishes. The Committee having deliberated, resolved to send my sister instead of me; but M. Bonvent represented that my great-aunt, being turned eighty, and requiring every attention herself, could not possibly take charge of a being who required constant care, and refused the proposed exchange. Three days passed away in these discussions, and meantime M. Bonvent made his appearance at Les Echerolles. I shall never forget my astonishment when I found there was some

one in the world who still took an interest in me ! I listened without clearly understanding it, to the account of an aunt who claimed me as her great-niece. Could it be true that I had still relations, and relations interested in my fate !

The hope of leaving Les Echerolles, awoke my mind to a sudden state of activity ; a new life was opening before me ; I felt I might yet be happy. I thought I should at last escape from a place where so many vices reigned, and where I was left too much to myself, and I fancied that a change must be for the better. M. Bonvent returned to Moulins, after telling me all about my aunt, and her generous intentions towards me, and I remained full of new thoughts and wishes. The fourth day after his visit I received permission, or rather orders to depart.

The Committee had consented to my being transferred into the commune of Taix, where I was to live under the inspection of the municipality of the place, M. Bonvent engaging to restore me, if required, to the Moulins Revolutionary Committee. On these conditions, I was allowed to leave Les Echerolles.

My departure made no difference to my sister, who did not even know me, and who found in my nurse's tender and constant care all that she needed.

Nevertheless, I felt a pang at leaving her, in spite of the bright though vague hopes that filled my mind. In fact, I knew not what I hoped; my imagination, rejoicing in its temporary excitement, created beautiful visions out of nothing, and the power of hoping at all was renewed life to me.

One of the farmer's daughters went with me to Moulins, where we alighted at the inn. M. Alix and M. Bonvent were waiting for me, and the former was freed from his responsibility for me. The next day I was allowed to visit two old friends of my family, Madame Fabrice and Madame Grimaud, who received me very tenderly, though the stranger who accompanied me restrained their expressions of affection. My own stupidity in allowing her to come in with me deprived me of the happiness of talking to such dear friends, and I had only a moment to give to Josephine, the cherished companion of my earliest years.

CHAPTER VI.

Since trifles make the sum of human things,
 And half our misery from our foibles springs,
 Since life's best joys consist in peace and ease,
 And few can save or serve, but all may please,
 Oh ! let the gentle spirit learn from hence,
 A small unkindness is a great offence ;
 Large bounties to bestow we wish in vain,
 But all may shun the guilt of giving pain.

HANNAH MORE.

The patent offices of domestic love,
 Beyond all flattery, all price above.
 The mild forbearance of another's fault,
 The taunting word suppressed as soon as thought.
 On these Heav'n bade the bliss of life depend,
 And crushed ill-fortune when it gave a friend !

HAMLET.

JOURNEY — COQUETTE — MY RECEPTION AT L'OMBRE — MY NEW
 QUARTERS—MY AUNT—LIFE AT L'OMBRE—THE PRIEST.

M. BONVENT, having obtained what he had asked for, felt the necessity of taking me away as

quickly as possible. It would have been unwise to leave the Committee time to repent; but as there was no conveyance either public or private to be had, our only resource was going on horse-back. The little mare M. Bonvent rode was very gentle, and he assured me I should have nothing to fear, so he placed me upon her back, and followed me on foot.

Our first day's journey was of twenty-eight kilometers.* My possessions were very small, and I cared for little except my dog. Of all I had once loved, she was the only thing that remained to me, so I made her follow me. M. Bonvent hinted to me that Mademoiselle Melon was not fond of dogs.

"Very well," said I, "then little Coquette must stay in my room; she need not see her; but nothing shall make me forsake that faithful animal, which both my father and aunt have loved and caressed."

I arrived very tired at Décise, a little village on the Loire, and spent the night there, in the house of some exceedingly respectable people, who treated me with the most considerate kindness. Next day I resumed my journey, but this time I followed M. Bonvent, who had procured a horse at Décise.

* Kilometer, 1000 metres, 105 English yards.

I was told my steed went by the name of "The Niece's Mare," because it was ridden by all those Mademoiselle Melon sent to fetch. So she had other nieces besides me ! This was a grand piece of news and gave me much to look forward to.

We had four long leagues more to travel, during which I indulged myself in pleasant thoughts about the happy life I expected to lead with this kind relation, whose generosity had rescued me from the species of imprisonment in which I was vegetating. I pictured her to myself as a charming specimen of interesting old age ; she who, without knowing me, had cared for me, she whose thoughtful compassion came to my assistance, might undoubtedly reckon on my warmest gratitude. The magnitude of the benefit conferred upon me gave me the greatest reverence for her merits, and she seemed so excellent in my eyes that I thought she must be beautiful.

At last I arrived at L'Ombre, having made myself a most engaging portrait of my aunt's appearance and goodness. My heart beat violently when I opened the door, and, leaving Coquette in the court-yard, followed M. Bonvent, who introduced me, trembling as I was, into Mademoiselle Melon's presence.

I found her at her toilet. She was seated on

rather a low stool, while her maid was diligently frizzing her small tuft of perfectly white back hair. The moment was unfavourable. She had a large forehead, round red eyes, a wide nose, enormous hands and arms, and she leant forward with a stoop which had become habitual to her. She said to me, in a shrill, sharp voice: "Good morning to you, Mademoiselle des Echerolles," and made me sit down before her.

My dream had vanished, I felt frightened, and sitting down timidly, answered the questions she put to me awkwardly enough. Soon, to increase my discomfort, the door opened, and little Coquette, who was uneasy at being away from me, rushed into the room. When I beheld my poor little beast, all wet and muddy, I actually turned pale; and my aunt exclaimed, in her sharp voice:

"Turn the dog out!"

Her maid remarked to her that the dog belonged to me, and I assented in some alarm.

"Oh, if that is the case," replied Mademoiselle Melon in a gentler tone, "she may remain."

Much encouraged by this kindness, I made many excuses for having brought my little dog, explained the reasons why I was so fond of it, and

assured my aunt, that henceforth it should be left in my room whenever I came to her.

“Oh no !” said she, very good-humouredly, “pray bring Coquette with you whenever you like, the little dog will amuse me ;” and when we sat down to dinner, to M. Bonvent’s no small surprise, Coquette appeared quite established in my aunt’s good graces.

If I had known better at that time how the land lay, I should have been more fully aware of the great favour I was in.

I was lodged in the little room called “The Niece’s Apartment,” which was in a small house outside the court-yard, and close to a very public road. My aunt inquired if I was timid, and on my replying in the negative, I was taken to this apartment directly after supper, the little luggage I possessed was deposited in it, and the servant wished me a good night. I shut the door, and sat down to try and realise my position quietly. *Never* had I felt so lonely.

I became more and more astonished at my own lot ; it seemed to me a new and strange thing to be taken with so much difficulty from Les Eche-rolles to occupy this little solitary cell, where I seemed quite abandoned to my fate. The room was on the ground floor, and one fragile hook

alone fastened the window-shutters, which a hard blow from any one's fist would have burst open easily. The rest of the house was uninhabited, and if I had needed help I could not have made myself heard by anybody. I felt I might disappear entirely, without any one knowing whether it were willingly or by force.

These feelings discomposed me not a little; and not knowing what to think of my adventures, I tried to amuse myself by examining my cell. Its contents were these. A bed, of which the canopy was of paper, and the curtains of grey cloth, bordered with blue satin. A quilt of blue gingham. A large old yellow arm-chair. The walls were white-washed; there was a small window, a large chimney, and a book-shelf in one corner, on which reposed a "History of China," in ten or twelve volumes.

When the rapid inventory was taken, an indescribable sensation came over me. I was not discontented, I should have blushed at the very thought of such a thing; but there was something strange in all that surrounded me; everything seemed so incoherent, and made me feel frightened, without knowing why, so that my first night was a disturbed one enough.

The next morning Mademoiselle Melon came to

me. She spoke to me sometimes kindly, but sometimes roughly ; and my heart, which yearned for sympathy, was chilled and repulsed. When I heard I was to have another aunt, I had hoped my past losses might have been repaired ! This painful feeling was soon softened by the remembrance of all I owed her. Gratitude brightened my lot, and the first weeks of my residence at L'Ombre were not unhappy in their monotonous tranquillity. Astonished that Mademoiselle Melon should ever have taken the trouble to think about me, and deeply touched by a kindness I so little deserved at her hands, I tried hard to please her, and apparently succeeded. I studied her tastes, and all her little ways ; and carefully conformed to them, that my exactitude in complying with her wishes might atone in her eyes for all other demerits.

She often spoke to me with interest about my family, and then my whole attention was rivetted. She told me that she had spent several years in her youth with my grandmother, who was her aunt ; and it was to the grateful recollections she entertained of those times that I owed her generous assistance, for she thought it a duty to return to the grand-daughter some of the care the grandmother had bestowed upon her ; and so were verified the

words of Holy Writ : " Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days."

Very soon, as I got accustomed to her manner and voice (so different from my own aunt's), I thought only of her generosity and goodness. Mademoiselle Melon had a great deal of genius and originality in her ideas, and combined an unusual degree of information, with a prodigious memory. She had also seen much of society in her day ; but she had long retired from the world, and had no notion of the Revolution that had taken place. When she heard the Committee had really taken possession of her house she became furious, and every time she thought of it her wrath returned.

There is no doubt her imprudent expressions would have been the death of her, if, as I have already said, M. Bonvent had not always contrived to prevent her setting off to defend her rights. She constantly talked of doing so, but never accomplished it ; and habit gradually wove its links around her, so that she remained settled in her country house. At turned eighty, a journey becomes a great exertion, and she thought it less trouble to rail at the interlopers from her own fire-side.

It was before my arrival, and in the midst of

the Reign of Terror, that my aunt had the strange suitor, of whom I have spoken. It was never known whether the fellow was merely a presuming fool, or was a tool in the hands of some bad jester, but he appeared no more.

Many young women of good family were less fortunate than my aunt. Whether from timidity, or the hope of saving their parents from death, they consented to similar odious alliances; and neither saved their families, nor their property. What could be more dreadful than such useless degradation? One of my cousins (who was very pretty), being required to contract one of these low marriages, boldly replied, that she was betrothed to a soldier of the Republic; and would remain faithful to one of her country's defenders, who at that moment was risking his life for its safety. Her firmness was applauded; she was left to the republican soldier, who, however, existed only in her imagination.

My residence at L'Ombre—deeply grateful as I was for the shelter thus afforded me—had few beneficial effects on my character. Too much left to my own thoughts, and deprived of my nurse's affectionate cares and advice, I often felt utterly neglected. I was, in fact, *alone*. I opened the "History of China," which I mentioned in the

survey of my room ; but the first volumes disgusted me by wearying repetitions of barbarous names, and I cast it aside. It is possible I might have ended by taking some interest in it, if I had gone on patiently ; but nobody tried to persuade me to conquer my disinclination for it ; nobody gave me any assistance ; nobody, in fact, took the least trouble about my education. For more than a year I had not been able to read or write ; I had no money to buy drawing materials, or writing-paper, I had hardly anything even to work with ; and my aunt, with all her kindness, never appeared even to perceive my need of these things.

This was the order of my life with her. At nine o'clock I went every day to wish her good morning ; coffee was brought to her at the same time, and five or six cats, summoned by the loud mews of the waiting-maid, used to rush in from every side of the court-yard to share their mistress's breakfast. When they had done, they vanished as they had come—that is to say, through the window. I followed their example, except in as much as I took my departure through the door ; and all this occurred daily without the least variety. I returned to my aunt's room at twelve o'clock, and twelve o'clock with her was half-past eleven

everywhere else, for my aunt's appetite regulated her watch, and as her watch regulated the house, everything took place earlier there than elsewhere.

To avoid all discussion on this subject, she had herself broken the main-spring of all her clocks, that no one except herself might be aware of the exact time. On days when she was particularly hungry, a slight poke with her thumb would advance the minute hand of her watch an extra half-hour; when, immediately taking up her walking-cane, and crossing the court-yard to the dining-room, she would express her astonishment that dinner was not on the table. The cook would cry out that it was not cooked, that it could not be much past eleven o'clock anywhere, and she was quite right; but my aunt's only reply would be "Look at my watch, it is past twelve o'clock."

When the poke with her thumb had not been too decided, I used to reach her room in time to come with her, but occasionally I could not prevent her getting the start of me, and then she was not pleased, and the conversation would ^{*}languish. After dinner, I always returned with her to her room, where I remained until four o'clock. I found an arm-chair placed for me by a table; but I might neither move it nor change my place on any account whatever. There, then I sat, in the

most perfect silence, and, occupied with some quiet needlework, was present at the visit which the parish priest paid every day at the same hour.

At this time, no priest whatever was allowed to officiate; the churches were shut up or turned into "Temples of Reason;" this priest, therefore, no longer said mass. He had given way to the "Nation" in all that was required of him, (for all was still done in the name of "The Nation,") and it was only owing to his particularly yielding character that he was left in the state of repose he then enjoyed. His visits were long; he was often still deep in conversation when the clock struck four, and apparently endeavoured by interesting discourses on all sorts of subjects to keep my aunt amused for a part of the day, and so make her some return for all the kindness he received from her from time to time. At four o'clock, I left her to return at six, or in winter at five o'clock. Oh, how long these winter evenings seemed! When I came back, I regularly found my aunt seated at one corner of the fire-place, and her maid Barbara at the other; my arm-chair, placed opposite to the fire, stood nearly in the middle of the room; the fire was composed of two large billets of wood—there were no lights—and there I had to sit, as

grave as a judge, though but fifteen years had passed over my head.

For a long time I was tolerably content; to complain would have appeared to me an idea of the greatest ingratitude. I had not even the merit of subduing sad thoughts, for I had none. I thought that all ladies of my aunt's age, led the same sort of life, and that it was no more than my duty to conform to it. Besides, I really liked Mademoiselle Melon; her conversation was very amusing, and on her bright days she would tell me many an interesting anecdote of her youth; at other times she would make me repeat to her the story of my past trials, so that the time passed quickly enough.

When all this lost its novelty, however, and my aunt was less disposed to talk, and sometimes kept silence for long together, the hours hung heavy on my hands; the darkness oppressed me, and against my will I often dropped asleep. This displeased my aunt, who thought it uncivil; so having procured a distaff and spindle I tried to spin by the dim light of the fire to keep myself awake, in which, however, I did not always succeed.

At seven o'clock, Mademoiselle Melon had her supper brought to her, as she did not leave her

room at night ; and would, indeed, have found it difficult to cross the court-yard in the dark. The doctors were alarmed at the quantity she ate, and forbade her having regular suppers. But she always ate just as much as she wanted, nevertheless, and persuaded herself she was not disobeying them, as she did not sit down to a regularly spread supper-table. I went to have my supper with the agent, and always returned as quickly as possible to relieve Barbara, who then departed to her own supper. When she was gone, I had leave to take her place by the fire. Mademoiselle Melon, having perceived that I was often very uncomfortable from crossing the cold court in passing from room to room, sometimes in wind and snow, and generally came in breathless and exhausted, used to make up a bright clear fire for me, and desire me to come close to it. There, still by firelight only, I would await Barbara's return, whose meal always occupied much more time than mine had done. When she returned, my day was over ; and I was glad to reach my own little room, and warm myself there quite at my ease.

I cannot deny that my days were often melancholy enough. My aunt had many evenings of silence and ill-humour, when it appeared impossible

to please her; everything was wrong; she was angry both if I spoke and if I did not speak, and accused me of being bored with her, which accusation, by increasing the restraint I already felt, made it doubly difficult for me to amuse either myself or her; so that nothing I could say or do gave satisfaction.

It was but natural that my aunt's temper, at her age, should be uneven occasionally, but it weighed on my mind as an irremediable evil; and sighing after my little room, and its undisturbed though solitary liberty, I was happy nowhere else, and often forgot the little vexations of the day, as I sate till late in the night, busied in thought by the fireside. Those little contrarieties were doubtless good for me, and helped to discipline my wayward spirit, although I knew it not at the time.

I cannot imagine now how I existed so long at L'Ombre, without books, without society, and almost without employment. Mademoiselle Melon rarely visited my room; and it makes me smile even now to think of the alarm that pervaded the house when she made one of her rounds! I think I have made it clear that the kitchen and the dining-room were in the opposite side of the buildings to that which she occupied. The moment she appeared at the door of her apartment,

every one tried to make their escape; while she came slowly on, leaning on her gold-headed cane, for the swelling of her feet made walking painful to her. The ends of them were just stuck into little high-heeled slippers, which came off at every step she took; and she was heard grumbling aloud as she proceeded.

“Good Heavens!” she would exclaim, as she pushed away with the end of her stick the little bits of wood which were left lying about, “what untidiness! what waste! Here is enough wood to warm a house! I have always said these people will ruin me; they will ruin me yet.” Talking in this way, she would reach the kitchen at last, which was sure to be quite empty, as the servants had time to escape while she crossed the court-yard. “What a fire!” she would exclaim. “I have said it, they will ruin me!” and then she would labour to take off the logs of wood, and remove the fire brands.

She had long before caused one of the heavy andirons to be taken away, to prevent so much wood being burnt. Lamenting the inutility of that precaution, she would take a turn round the kitchen, inspecting everything with the utmost minuteness, and making a stir amongst the dishes and saucepans. After she had called repeatedly,

Nanny (who at all other times reigned supreme in the kitchen) would appear timidly before her, and bear the brunt of the storm. The dinner she was preparing, or the cooking of some particular dish, would be sure to occasion a long dispute ; then at last my aunt would return as she came.

Hardly was she out of sight when the logs were put back, the firebrands raked together again, and everything went on as usual. If by chance she approached my room, the general panic would infect me too. I could hear her afar off, bemoaning the carelessness of the servants, and muttering : " I have said it," as she stopped every moment to collect scattered sticks from the faggots which had been carried across. At the sound of her voice, I always tidied my room as best I could, and went to meet her with the most dutiful respect ; but she always found fault with me, and blamed my want of order. To escape her reproaches, I used at last to hide anything I had in hand between the mattresses of my bed. My aunt, when she blamed me for having any little things scattered about, forgot that I had no place to put them in, but the drawers of a writing-table. She would give me lessons in economy too, of which I thought some were wise, but many disagreeable. " In winter you must go to bed without a candle,"

she would say ; “ you will have plenty of light from the fire.” It is impossible to deny that Mademoiselle Melon’s rounds were terrible visitations.

My aunt leaving her room so seldom, knew very little in reality of what went on in her establishment, and still less on her estate. M. Bonvent, her man of business, who was really master of everything, had complete possession of the lands we lived upon, without ever giving any account of what they produced to Mademoiselle Melon ; who luckily received the rents of her other estates herself, and thought she made rather a good bargain with him, in insisting upon his paying part of the household expenses ; and this agreement at least gave us quiet, after some very animated disputes. Nevertheless, from time to time, difficulties arose. The mistress would complain that her just rights were disregarded ; the servant, now accustomed to rule her, would refuse to obey, and neglecting her orders, would live for a time in open rebellion.

My aunt would sometimes send me with messages to M. Bonvent, who received them very ungraciously ; while my aunt would be equally displeased with the answers I brought back, so that I came off badly in these domestic wars. Per-

sonally, however, I had no causes of complaint, for M. Bonvent was invariably respectful in his manner to me. He was accused of many irregularities, but I never heard one word from him that could annoy me, which was the more surprising, as I could not conceal from myself that he often was quite tipsy when he came in to supper; but on those occasions he invariably preserved an unbroken silence. I ought perhaps to apologise for relating such minutiae, which may appear tedious; but what is life itself, but a succession of minute details? I would fain make my account of them amusing; but if it is not, let the reader consider how oppressive the actual endurance of them must have been! Great events occupy but little space in one's life; they quickly break up, and reduce you again to those little things which make the charm or the torment of existence!

The disputes for supremacy in our house, thanks to the weakness of one of the conflicting powers, occasionally gave rise to most comical scenes; and unimportant as it may appear, one of these was so characteristic, that I cannot resist the pleasure of describing it.

Mademoiselle Melon always ordered our supper herself, which was natural enough; but it happened that we had the same dishes every day; and

M. Bonvent, weary of seeing nothing but *miroton* (scraps of beef fried with onions) and *gibelotte* (fricassee of rabbits), took it at last into his head that he would order our suppers ; and very good they were. We had plenty of chickens, and very often excellent fish, and other things in proportion. I do not know what suggested the idea to Mademoiselle Melon, but one night she asked me what I had had for supper ?

“ A fricassee of chicken, my dear aunt.”

“ Really ! of chicken, was it ?”

“ Yes ; and, moreover, it was very good.”

“ Really !”

She did not say a word more, but sending for Nanny before she went to bed, she began to storm at her, when the cook replied in the coolest way : “ Compose yourself, Ma’am, your orders have been obeyed ; but Mademoiselle des Echerolles is very absent. She was thinking of something else, and she fancied she was eating chickens.”

This girl persuaded her mistress so entirely of the truth of her story, that the next morning, Mademoiselle Melon, with a smile at my absence of mind, assured me that I had been eating fried beef, instead of chicken. It was my turn to

exclaim, "Really, fried beef!" But my look of astonishment was taken for confirmation, and my reputation of being a very absent person firmly established. I was even obliged to take some pains afterwards to support it, for my aunt began to question me often, and I would now answer boldly: "I do not recollect anything about our supper, my dear aunt."

"How surprising!" she would remark. "When you are just come from it!"

And no doubt it would appear very surprising; but I was thinking of poor Nanny. She used to come to me every day with her troubles, and exclaim: "Have pity upon me, Mademoiselle, for I know not what to do! M. Bonvent orders one thing, Mademoiselle another. He will be sure to turn me out if I disobey him. My mistress will dismiss me directly if you speak; and if I lose my place I shall be without bread."

My aunt's estate seemed quite out of the world, for hardly anybody ever came there. But if a visitor did appear, he was by no means sure of being graciously received; and even when my aunt was very civil, she still had a sort of dread of the visit becoming too long, and would generally

contrive to shorten it, especially if it was some neighbour who had come in to dinner. The moment they had left the table, and returned to her sitting-room, she became restless ; and at the first symptom her guest gave of moving in his chair, she would exclaim : " Oh, Sir ! are you leaving me already ? Would you so soon deprive me of the pleasure of your company ? Mademoiselle des Echerolles, run and see whether the horses are ready, that this gentleman may not have the bore of being kept waiting ! "

I had nothing for it but to hasten to execute my aunt's orders ; while the astonished stranger went on listening to the civil regrets of my aunt, who was expelling him so politely. There was something very eccentric and amusing in this way of dismissing her friends ; but it made me then feel very uncomfortable. I did not like it. Some people were angry, and never came again, while others only laughed ; but her conduct made visitors extremely scarce, which condemned me to almost total solitude.

People who live alone, and whose fortune enables them to have fancies and to satisfy them, are extremely apt to let them degenerate into habits that nothing can disturb. This was the

history of Mademoiselle Melon : everything around her was to give way to the force of her habits. Charitable and compassionate as she really was, anxious to do all the good she could to her fellow-creatures, and endowed with a kind and generous heart; the eccentricities which had become habitual to her often made her appear harsh. Thus one day, when, without knowing that I was thwarting any of her prejudices, I came to beg her to allow me to send for a surgeon to take out one of my teeth, she replied by asking me if I meant to say I had got the tooth-ache?

"Yes, my dear aunt," I said, "I have been suffering horribly with it."

"It is your own fault then," rejoined my aunt. "*I* have never had the tooth-ache ; and you shall not have a tooth taken out in this house."

I must repeat that my aunt was really most kind, but this was one of her fancies ; and every one knows the power a fancy may acquire.

My unlucky tooth had given me many a sleepless night before I left Les Echerolles, whilst I was under arrest there. Weary of pain, I sent for the nearest apothecary to take it out ; but he sent me

word that he would not attend an aristocrat ! Not wishing to run the risk of another such answer, I kept my tooth ; and my aunt's singular mania now produced the same result as the apothecary's republicanism.

Thus the parish priest was the only person who was daily admitted to visit Mademoiselle Melon. She partly supported him, for he was very poor ; the Nation paying little or nothing towards the maintenance of priests, complying as many of them had shown themselves with its requisitions. He had never married, because he had met with several refusals, a fact which he openly complained of, and expressed the hope of being some day more fortunate. What I cannot explain to myself is the inconsistency of those unfortunate men. For instance, a neighbouring priest married, and the priest of L'Ombre gave him the nuptial benediction according to the forms of that Church which they had both renounced, and the truth of which they had denied. And in speaking of the marriage, he gravely said to me : " That priest is my friend, and a very pious man, and I did not feel at liberty to refuse him my ministry."

I dreaded that man, and would never receive

him in my own apartment, being persuaded that a bad priest must be bad indeed. He revenged himself during the visits he paid my aunt, by taking advantage of her deafness to say many things to me I should never have listened to elsewhere; feeling certain that even if I ventured to complain of him, Mademoiselle Melon would not believe me. I was also quite certain of this, knowing how much she respected him. He offered to lend me books, but a wisdom beyond my years, and which certainly came not of my own strength, made me refuse them from him, while I accepted some from M. Bonvent. "Mademoiselle, I have a good many books," the latter said to me very candidly; "but there are only two which I can lend *you* with a safe conscience, the life of Marshal Turenne, and that of Prince Eugène."

These I read without scruple, and never repented having done so. During this first residence at L'Ombre I received one day from a stranger a small sum of money, with an unsigned note, stating that this money was for my use. I never knew who the kind donor was till long afterwards, when I learnt that my excellent nurse having nothing to give, and fearing that I was in want, conquered her natural timidity so far as to solicit the

appointment of keeper of the seals newly placed on everything at Les Echerolles, that she might forward the salary to me. Was not this, indeed, a faithful friend ?

CHAPTER VII.

A faithful friend—best boon of Heaven,
 Unto some favoured mortal given,
 Though still the same, yet varying still,
 Our each successive wants to fill.

* * * * *

Round childhood's path a happy charm,
 In age a tried supporting arm,
 A chastening drop in cup of gladness,
 A light to paint the mists of sadness.
 Whatever form his presence wears,
 That presence every form endears !



A NEW FRIEND—I GO TO MOULINS — MADAME GRIMAUD — MY
 AUNT'S LEGACY — I RETURN TO L'OMBRE — MY COUSIN — ST.
 ANTHONY'S DAY—REUNION WITH MY FATHER.

My monotonous days were agreeably enlivened by the arrival of a friend of my eldest brother, M. Languinier, of Nevers, who being much interested in me, although we had never met, ran the risk of the reception he might experience from

my aunt. He was handsome and agreeable, and altogether she was pleased with him; and although his pleasant conversation did not entirely save him from the usual dismissal, his reception was satisfactory on the whole. He talked to me with friendly interest about my affairs, and intimated that he thought it my duty to attend to them seriously, for the sake of my family.

“ Being the only one of them in this country,” he said, “you ought to try and preserve to your father such of his possessions as still remain unsold. Think of this, and exert yourself.”

I had been now several months at L’Ombre, and during that time France, having once more become tranquil, was gradually progressing towards peace, and all were endeavouring to free the country from executions and arrests. The prison doors were opened, and those who had been crowded into them emerged once more to the enjoyment of light and air. All restraints were removed; weary of blood and victims, the people no longer required sacrifices. The heads of parties alone were still disputing; we were allowed to repose.

M. Languinier used this restored liberty as a pretext to urge upon my aunt the necessity of my taking some decided steps. A guardian must be

chosen for me, he said ; and he explained to her how important was this appointment, which could only be determined at Moulins, whither he begged her to allow me to go. Mademoiselle Melon thought my wish to go there a very reasonable one, and agreed most kindly to send me thither. This was my second journey on horseback. On one December day I rode fifty-six kilometers. After struggling through the wind and snow, I arrived, very weary, though excessively happy, at Madame Grimauld's, who received me like a tender mother to whom a daughter is restored after a long absence. Once more I beheld and embraced Josephine, and for a time I forgot all my trials.

It was then that I learnt how much I owed to Madame Grimauld, and that she told me of the danger I had been in of going to the Dépôt, and of her determination to have accompanied me thither. I cannot express my feelings ; but the gratitude which filled my heart for the devotion of this excellent friend, was in proportion to the horror with which the thoughts of the risk I had run inspired me.

The month I passed at her house was one of mingled happiness and regrets. In seeing Josephine, who had never been separated from her mother, I became aware how different I was.

The reader may easily guess that my education had been very deficient, and I now felt humbled at the contrast between us. Her graceful manners and well-bred ease, combined with a natural flow of eloquence in all she said, made Josephine a charming person. I tried hard to improve myself, by gleanings a little from her, both in mind and manners. In other things, we were as far removed from each other as beauty and ugliness. But in admiring the graces she possessed, I never lamented over my personal appearance, because I rejoiced as truly in her advantages as if they had been my own. It seemed to me quite natural that she should be lovely and admired by every one; ever since our childhood it had been the case, and sincere affection is free from jealousy. How sweet were the hours we now spent together! How charming was our perfect intimacy to a heart which, like mine, had been for so long denied the happiness of expanding in unrestrained intercourse!

Having been obliged to live entirely to myself, and to keep in all my thoughts and ideas, I listened with delight to the simple and truthful conversations between my friend and her mother. Easy and ladylike manners and frank openheartedness combined in them to remind me of my

happy days, and of the atmosphere in which my childhood had been spent. A whole lifetime of happiness was compressed into these few weeks !

All my relations declined accepting the office of my guardian : just emerged from prison themselves, they did not feel competent to protect another ; but they met together and appointed for that purpose, M. Charles, a lawyer, who asked and obtained for me a provisional supply, which I think was almost all he did in that line. I received two thousand francs* in paper money, which, however, had already diminished in value ; and went off to Les Echerolles, where I saw my sister and my nurse, and found them both in good health. I added many little things to their comforts, and leaving some of my paper money with my nurse, I returned to my friend's house. Josephine, as well as her mother, gained money by embroidering. All my cousins did the same. The impoverished nobility thus laboured for the upstarts, and, whether in prison or under arrest in their own houses, they worked hard to supply their own wants, for money was very scarce with them. Many ladies obtained leave to remain as prisoners in their own apartments, a favour greatly coveted by all, though many could not obtain it.

* A franc is about tenpence.

One of these last, detained in the Carmelite prison, vainly entreated to be allowed to return to her own house. Her health appearing perfectly good, she was refused this favour. What did she do? She was living alone in a little cell, and having found means to procure herself a bundle of vine-branches, she calculated the time of the doctor's approaching visit accurately enough to burn her faggot at the right moment, and then run up and down as hard as she could before the fire, which was intensely hot, though it quickly burnt itself away. When he arrived he found her in a tremendous heat, her face perfectly scarlet, and her pulse fearfully quick; and as he saw nothing to occasion this burning fever, he naturally thought she must be very ill. She encouraged him in his mistake, and begged to be allowed to die in her own bed, where she went comfortably to sleep, not a little pleased at her craftiness. I suppose she had the prudence to make her imaginary illness last some time.

Soon after my return from Les Echerolles, I received an account of my father from a Swiss woman, who proved herself to have really come from him by showing me some small tablets, of no intrinsic value, but which I recognised as having belonged to my mother. She also gave me a

note, written on a piece of crape, which she had hid in the lining of her gown, and took out in our presence. No sooner had I finished reading these beloved characters than Madame Grimauld, out of prudence, compelled me to put them in the fire. I wrote a few words to my father without name or date, and I gave this woman all that I had left of paper money to take to him. I much regretted that I had so little to send, but it proved fortunate, for the messenger deceived every one who had trusted her, and kept all for herself. I believe she came from Lausanne, but I will conceal her name, for it is disgraceful indeed to deceive those who are already in distress.

It was therefore lucky for me that it was not till after her departure that Madame Fabrice sent for me, and gave me, as a bequest from my aunt, my dear, unfortunate aunt, twenty-five pounds in money, which she had deposited in her hands, to be given to the first of our family who, being in poverty, should pass through Moulins.

“I should have given them to you when you passed through before,” she said, “if you had not been accompanied by a third person, who might have proved dangerous; and I felt bound to take every care of this sacred deposit.”

I cannot say what deep emotions of pious

gratitude and admiration filled my heart when I received this money, preserved by the clear-sighted generosity and thoughtfulness of my aunt.

She must, then, have foreseen the evil days that were coming. From beyond the grave she seemed yet to bestow her benefits upon me. She was gone, but her kindness still survived to assist me.

Many years have passed since that day, but never, *never* can I think of it without being filled with veneration for her memory, and also with fervent admiration of the great qualities she possessed. Her mental vision penetrating the dark veil of the future, foresaw, and but too correctly, the troublous times that were coming. Her heart, following the dictates of her good sense, prepared help for the future; and ever scattering benefits around her, she even succeeded in imparting them after she was gone. Her real greatness of mind was long unknown to those around her, it was hardly recognised when it passed away; and her soul, which seemed ripe for heaven, was summoned thither.

Before long I had to leave the house of my second mother to return to L'Ombre. I shed many tears on parting from her and Josephine.

Having once again become accustomed to the sweet society of those who loved me, I quitted it sorrowfully, to return to a desert. It cost me much to do so, but short as my residence at Moulins had been, it produced some good effects, which remained with me after I left it.

My mind had been cultivated by intercourse with many relations, distinguished for their good qualities, who treated me with real affection; I had returned to the sort of society I had once been used to, and had again acquired something of its manners.

The pleasant and instructive conversation of my friends improved my understanding, their kindness gave me confidence and diminished my awkwardness, and their affectionate attentions seemed to give me new life. Deeply touched by their tender cares, I took back to my solitude recollections enough to cheer my loneliness. I carried away with me from Moulins a good many things which had belonged to us formerly, and had been saved by our friends from the general ruin. My wardrobe, too, was rather better supplied, and enabled me to look a little like other people. My aunt had had the kindness to supply me with a new gown, which saved me from the humiliation of exciting compassion.

When I arrived at L'Ombre, it was too late to appear before my aunt; and I hastened to my own room, impatient to see what sort of company I should find there, for the servant who brought the horses for me had informed me that one of my cousins had arrived during my absence. This was Mademoiselle Leblanc de l'Espinasse, whom I had often heard of, but never seen. I felt as if she were an old acquaintance, however, and cried out "Here I am!" to her before I was well off my horse, so charmed was I at the prospect of having a companion. She might have been fifty years old, and I should still have thought her one, for everything seemed young to me after Mademoiselle Melon.

As it happened, however, my new cousin was very pretty, and really young, though much older than myself. A pleasant manner and a great deal of cleverness and information combined to make of her a charming person. I was quite inclined to grow fond of her, and our friendship was soon mutual. I felt a great respect for her, not because she was older than I, but because she was very fond of algebra. I could not comprehend this taste, which I had fancied peculiar to men; and when leaving this abstruse study, I saw her working

beautifully, and making up all sorts of pretty things, I did not know whether I was most surprised at the variety of her tastes or the versatility of her talents.

I was not a little pleased to have a young companion for the long dark winter evenings; and though my aunt, being bored with our little conversations, made a rule that we were not to talk to each other, yet there were at least two of us to hear things, and we could guess each other's thoughts, though we could not express them, for our chairs were placed so far asunder that we could not speak in a low voice. My aunt wished to hear everything. Her hearing was very bad, but still she occasionally recovered it, so that her deafness was of a treacherous kind, and we dared not trust to it.

During this enforced silence my mind was full of thoughts longing to be expressed. I never felt that I had so much to say at any other time. A hundred bright ideas always came rushing into my mind; but I had to keep them to myself, or at any rate, to reserve them for our pleasant talks by our own fire at bedtime. I was consoled by thinking that my cousin felt the same as I did, for troubles shared together press more lightly. What, however, could be done to break the

monotony of our daily life? I was dying to do something new, to say something new; in short, to give some one day a different aspect from all the preceding ones.

My aunt's saint's day was approaching, and this gave us an opportunity for a little change, of which we determined to avail ourselves. St. Anthony was her patron saint, and we decided to celebrate his festival with an unusual degree of gaiety for L'Ombre, the preparations for which brightened and occupied many of our days by the thousand little inventions which such an undertaking, in a place so bare of resources, compelled us to have recourse to. In my excitement, I dreamt of nothing but flowers and garlands. I wanted to trim our gowns with wreaths of green leaves; but my cousin was cruel enough to disturb all my little arrangements by bidding me look out of the window. The ground was covered with snow. In thinking of St. Anthony, I had forgotten the 17th of January.

At last the sun rose on the long wished-for festal morning. My cousin had entreated her uncle to come that day to visit Made-

moiselle Melon ; and M. de Chaligni, true to his word, arrived early, with his son Frederick, to assist us in our schemes. He came to propose to dine with our aunt, who was also his ; and who liked him particularly, and asked him not unfrequently to spend a few days with her—a fortunate circumstance for our plans.

When we left the dinner-table, we slipped away one after the other, leaving M. de Chaligni to bear the whole brunt of entertaining my aunt for the afternoon. We had begged him to be amusing enough to prevent our absence being observed ; and from time to time an exclamation from my aunt of “ Where can the young ladies be ? ” made him redouble his exertions.

The young ladies, meantime, were putting on their white gowns and arranging their little presents as prettily as they could. These consisted of sugar-plums, pastry, fruits, chesnuts, and oranges, which we had procured from the neighbouring town, the only variety the season afforded us. We then went to join our people, who were collected in the kitchen, and convinced that a rehearsal was absolutely necessary,

we seized upon a good old peasant who had arrived by chance, and planting him in an arm-chair, ordered him to represent Mademoiselle Melon. After, in the first place, making two profound curtseys, we recited emphatically before him the verses we had composed in honour of my aunt. He took it all for Latin.

"It is beautiful," he exclaimed, "although I cannot understand it!"

I too was inclined to think my verses beautiful, because they had cost me an infinity of trouble!

At length we set out. Not at all knowing what sort of reception we should meet with, my aunt's faithful servant, James, went in first, and his appearance surprised her a good deal, because she knew he never came in at that time of day without some important reason.

"Madam," he said, "I am come to announce to you that a large party of people have stopped here, and beg permission to see you."

"But, James," she replied, "you know perfectly well that I do not see company!"

"Oh! I told them that, but they said it did not signify, they should not intrude upon you for long."

"I will not see them ! It is an undue hour for visitors ! Go and send them away !"

"That would be difficult, Ma'am," rejoined James, "for they are already at your door."

We had much difficulty in suppressing our laughter, as we listened to this conversation.

My aunt now got up from her arm-chair, uneasily, and leaning one hand on the chimney-piece, cried : "But what do they look like, James? do you know them?"

"No, Ma'am."

"And at such a late hour!" continued my aunt, in a despairing tone, "so very, very late ! I shall not know what to give all these people for supper ! What an unheard-of intrusion ! M. de Chaligni, pray light the candles ! For Heaven's sake bestir yourself a little and be quick !"

My cousin, though unable to restrain his laughter at my aunt's violent discomposure, began to twist up a little bit of paper between his fingers, but not quickly enough to please her, for she continued rapidly :

"What are you about ? How slow you are ! There are some matches ! What an idea, to come at this time of night !"

While still standing bolt upright, she fixed her eyes anxiously upon the door. Hardly were the candles thoroughly lighted, when she saw the party enter, each carrying some little offering; and forming a circle round her, all sang in chorus a little couplet I had composed for them. To add to the surprise, my aunt did not recognise in the expected strangers any one of her servants. We came in next, each holding a nosegay in one hand and a basket of sugar-plums in the other, followed by Frederick, who was loaded with an immense apple-tart.

We recited our verses, and my aunt, still standing by the chimney-piece, was so astonished that she seemed neither to understand or see aright. All was now a scene of joyful confusion. We wished my aunt many happy returns of the day in plain prose, and each of us embraced her, while we laughed at her surprise. At length she saw what we were at, laughed with us, recognised the pretended strangers who filled her room, and, now that she was no longer uneasy about supper, looked at all her presents with unfeigned pleasure, and thanked us most graciously. I never saw her look so happy. A pleasant departure from the usual formal

routine, continued through the whole evening, which became an epoch in the annals of L'Ombre ; and we separated merrily after mutual good wishes had been expressed on all sides.

Next day my aunt was good enough to ask us for more particulars of our little plan, and seemed much interested in hearing all about it.

"My dear aunt," said I, "you were stretching out your hand all the time for my basket, but I held it fast till the end of my oration !"

Alas for my pride as an authoress !

"What oration ? What poem ?"

She had heard nothing ! Her eyes were straying from the tarts and the *bonbons* to the oranges and wafers, and her attention was so taken up by the quantity of good things set before her that she heeded nothing else !

"Oh, my dear aunt ! Our beautiful verses ! What a mortification to our conceit !"

"Really ! did you repeat verses ? I had no idea of it ! Well, you must say them over again to-day ; it will be all the same in the end !"

So we sat to work and acted our parts over again.

My cousin, whose clever inventions had dis-

tracted my aunt's attention so effectually from my poor composition, deserved the most credit for our successful scheme, and I was delighted to hear my aunt thank her for it in the most cordial and gracious way; for she was sometimes severe enough in her manner to her. The decided opinions all her family expressed against those priests who had taken the oaths hurt Mademoiselle Melon deeply, because it cast a discredit on the priest who held so high a place in her esteem.

This sometimes gave rise to unpleasant scenes, because my aunt always thought there was blame implied to herself in this difference of opinion. I have often remarked that our inclination to find fault with our neighbours arises most frequently from thinking that their differing from us implies a reproach to ourselves, and that we are not apt to accord to them that freedom of thought and opinion which we claim in our own case. The priest, vexed at feeling himself slighted, did not soften my aunt's ill-humour, which produced fresh annoyances and restraints to our little circle.

About this time I made acquaintance with a Swiss, who had been some time in the neigh-

bourhood ; an honest man, they said, and about to return to his own country. Such opportunities being scarce, I determined to confide to him the money Madame Fabrice had sent me, and I gave him my father's direction, and the tenderest messages a daughter's anxious heart could dictate. My cousin also entrusted him with a watch for her uncle, M. de Laxi. It happened, however, as with our last messenger, that nothing reached its destination ! I will not reveal the name of this messenger either, but it seemed as if the Swiss brought me no good luck ; and I felt deeply these losses, which I had no power to replace.

The spring passed away very peacefully. Reading and walking filled up our days pleasantly enough. I even thought they passed too quickly away, for my cousin was summoned home by her father, and was going to leave me. Very soon all seemed a desert around me, but my solitude did not last ; the great crisis which had freed so many honest people from prison was gradually bringing the country to a state of peace and conciliation. Those who had emigrated from Lyons all returned home, my father amongst the number ; his name was

erased (at any rate for the present) from the list of the proscribed, and he re-entered, at least provisionally, upon the possession of his property. He told me this happy news by letter, and said he should soon come and fetch me in person, as he wished to thank my aunt himself for the refuge she had so generously afforded me.

My joy was great upon receiving this letter—a messenger of good tidings, indeed. I counted the days impatiently till my father's arrival, and the tearful happiness of our meeting cannot be described. I had never seen him since my aunt's death. He had much to tell me, and I had almost as much to relate as to hear. He described the dangers he had run in entering Switzerland; and pictured to me the fears he had undergone for me, and the entire ignorance he was in for a long time as to my fate. Mademoiselle Melon heard the recital of his adventures with great interest, seeing in him at once an actor and a sufferer in the great struggle. She was very fond of my father, and liked to hear him talk. After a week's rest, he requested my aunt's permission

to depart, as his affairs required his presence at Moulins ; and I went with him, filled with gratitude to my aunt, but very, very happy to leave L'Ombre.

CHAPTER VIII.

How soon the day is done—
 The longest summer day ;
 'Tis morn, 'tis noon, 'tis set of sun,
 Ah, well-a-day !

MRS. K. ARKWRIGHT.

A SUMMER OF HAPPINESS—REACTION—FLIGHT TO LYONS—
 AVENGERS OF BLOOD—FRESH PERSECUTIONS—MY FATHER
 LEAVES LYONS, AND I RETURN TO LES ECHEROLLES.

I NOW saw Josephine again. My father fervently invoked the blessing of Heaven on all those who had protected his daughter in her troubles ; and dividing our time as we did between the town and the country, this summer was one of the happiest of my life. The house at Moulins, where the Revolutionary Committee had held their sittings, was restored to us, and

we lodged there during our short visits to the town. I am not sure whether I mentioned in an earlier page of this history that my aunt's foresight, before she left Les Echerolles, had induced her to conceal all the plate in a cellar. She had not even been present at the hiding of it, for she seemed to divine the future. "If any of us return, it will be you," she said to me. And, accordingly, the child she then designated returned to claim it.

We were waited on by a Wallachian, a prisoner of war, who could hardly speak any French, and whom my father had brought with him to save him from all the horrors he was undergoing. I made him understand what I wanted, and we went together into the little cellar which contained our treasures. It was not entirely emptied of the foreign wines we had stocked it with, but a great deal had been drunk. Some bottles were scattered about, and a good many still covered the place where I had caused the hole to be dug. The box had been broken, and the plate soon appeared, mixed up with dust and soil. Joseph, who quite understood that it must have escaped the researches of the Jacobins who had so often

visited this cellar, screamed with joy as each fresh article appeared, feeling that he had gained a victory over "those *robbers*, those *rogues*," as he called them, with rather a truthful application of the few French words he knew. Everything was safe. We carried to my father a basket full of plates and covered dishes ; and many a time did we bless my aunt's wisdom, for her precaution had supplied us with the means of existence for several years.

There is a species of political monster with two faces, one quiet and peaceful, the other cruel and bloody, of which we felt the varying influences constantly : it is called *reaction*. If the moderate party had the upper hand, all was tranquil, and hope re-entered every desolate heart. This was reaction. If, on the other had, the Revolutionists came to power, terror, reawakened by their voice, chilled even the bravest ; all endeavoured to hide themselves or escape. This was reaction, people said again. What could I tell about it, child as I was, for ever tossed by these storms, but ignorant of their causes, though feeling their effects but too clearly ? When the calm was restored, or when the rising tempests threatened us, I resigned myself to

my fate, merely repeating what I heard others say, that it was a "reaction," nor seeking to know more.

One day, when my father had sent me to Moulins to do some business for him, I found the town in great agitation. Alarming news had come from Paris ; A "Representative of the People" had arrived ; my father's provisional pardon had been revoked, and they spoke of arresting him—a "reaction" had taken place. I hastened home, and in a few hours our trunks were packed, and we were off in a wretched cab, of which the springs were all loose ; but we dared not delay long enough to have it set to rights. At the least shake, we were sent up against the roof of this abominable carriage, at the risk of fracturing our skulls.

In consequence of the "reaction," too, we could get no horses. Many of the representatives had gone to the south of France, and the post-masters being dreadfully annoyed by all these requisitions, ended by turning out their horses to grass, only keeping up the smallest number possible. We did not reach Lyons, consequently, for five days, though it is only eighteen kilometers distant from Moulins ;

and, moreover, we should have been forced to wait at mid-day, at the last post-house, for fresh horses, if good fortune had not brought in a supernumerary mail, the guard of which took compassion upon us. We speedily climbed into the narrow carriage, which was even harder and more shaky than our old one; and we found that there were really only two places, so, as we were three, I had to sit on the lap of our bulky and good-natured companion—another consequence of the reaction.

Our own carriage was brought to us the next morning, at M. Guichard's, Faubourg de Vaise, where we had alighted, and found a sure refuge with that faithful friend, who had persuaded my father to return to France and claim the benefit of the amnesty granted to the fugitives from Lyons. The new panic which had spread over our unhappy country, now filled Lyons with a number of people, who sought there either a safe hiding-place or means of escape into Switzerland.

We met there the family of Bussy, who arrived with us at Lyons, the day of our first flight from Moulins. Like ourselves, they had gone through many hardships, followed by a

short period of repose. Like ourselves too, they were again put to flight ! These meetings were sweet though sorrowful ; we could sympathise in each other's dangers and trials, while we trembled together at the present evils which seemed to accumulate around us. Several other people were sheltered by M. Guichard, as well as ourselves ; so we formed a safe and pleasant little society, to which no additions were made from without.

Lyons was then in a very singular state ; two strong hostile powers were battling within its walls. The Jesuits, with revengeful severity, threatened, pursued, and struck down the Jacobins ; filling their corrupt souls with terror, if not with remorse, and causing it to haunt them night and day. There was no peace for the Jacobins there, even though their power was again increasing in France, and their official reign returning for the misery of the country. Terrified at the mysterious powers which seized its prey in silence, many of them lay long concealed, while their places remained unoccupied.

It was rumoured that many young men, coming back from the army in which they had been fighting valiantly, and missing on their

return the home and the loved ones, for whom they had risked their lives, made inquiries into the causes of their loss, and many of the informers were slain in duels, in consequence of these private feuds, which were equally detrimental to both parties.

Exasperated by all the atrocities they brought to light, these young men soon resorted to stronger measures. They became assassins, while they thought themselves only righteous avengers. Some thought a duel too great an honour for such adversaries, they slew them by night as by day, by stratagem as well as by open violence. All means appeared legitimate to get rid of them. After having been killed, they were thrown into the Rhône or the Saône, whichever stream chanced to be nearest at the moment, and the water soon bore away the body of the victim. Sometimes, even in broad daylight, one of these men was pointed out to public justice by the cry of "*Matevon ! Matevon !*" "*Matevon*" being, in the Lyons dialect, a word for a man who cut off the heads of trees ; the slayers of men were therefore called "*Matevons*." When the cry was raised, the passers-by hardly took any notice, "It is but a

Matevon," they would say to themselves, and pass on.

All minds now were getting irritated by long and unjust persecution ; and, so departing also from the right way, many made themselves amends for the impossibility of obtaining justice, by taking the matter into their own hands. In fact, the prisons were now overflowing with terrorists of every grade, municipal officers, informers, men who had been unfaithful to the trusts committed to them ; in short, criminals of every sort, to whom the new authorities refused to grant even a hearing, being deaf to the just demands for judgment which arose on every side.

Then a reaction took place again, with even more violence than before ; and this time it was bloodthirsty and furious, and those who led it proclaimed that vengeance was theirs, and sought to repay blood for blood and suffering for suffering. They passed through the land, examining the prisons and reducing the atrocities they committed to a fearful system. They searched the register for every prisoner's name and massacred in cold blood all who had had a hand in the death of any one. Robbers and coiners of false money, and all who were guilty

of crimes of a similar nature, were passed over.

"There are laws to judge you," these men said, "and we will not disturb their course." So that people were heard to exclaim on every side, "Spare us ! we are only robbers !"

It was in one of these massacres that Citizen Forêt perished, with his wicked wife, his son, the municipal officer, and his daughter, who was as bad as any of them. This woman, who was quite as hard and cruel as her mother, used to wear a bonnet at the siege of Toulon, ornamented, instead of flowers, with bunches of tiny cannons, sabres, and muskets. It was a melancholy sort of bouquet, but well became its bloody wearer ; and there were even little guillotines hung about it !

Two priests and a banished man were found by the visitors in the prison at Roanne.

"Depart," they said, "at once ; you may not be set free so easily." And they paused to collect among themselves a sufficient sum of money to convey these three safely into Switzerland ; and then returned again to their bloody work !

When we arrived at Lyons, the progress of

this atrocious retributive justice was over ; a few occasional murders alone reminded us of it. The Jacobins returned to power, and by little and little made themselves feared once more. The hydra had not perished in the struggle, but every now and then raised one of its many heads as vigorously as before.

There existed a law which ordered that the fathers of those who had emigrated should repair to the houses they occupied in 1792, to remain there under a sort of arrest. My father having come to reside in Lyons, by the beginning of August in that year, hoped to satisfy the requirements of the law by remaining there. The town of Moulins then summoned him to reside under the control of their municipality. My father still held to Lyons ; Moulins would not come to terms, and a lawsuit being brought against him, he was condemned, for his resistance, to two years' imprisonment in irons. Several writs were issued against him successively, but in vain, as my father always contrived to escape them. Thus it was that we entered on a new era of persecutions and sufferings.

M. Guichard, whose courageous kindness had

been unvarying, now gave us a very touching proof of it. He had suffered for years from severe asthma, and also from dropsy, the rapid advances of which precluded him from every occupation, and made his life a weariness to him. Nevertheless, his earnest wish to be useful to my father conquered his bodily weakness. He asked and obtained a place in the municipality of Vaise, which enabled him to save us from being surprised, for he was necessarily applied to for every writ of arrest. Thus it happened that many of these mandates remained unfilled up, and I know not how he accounted for them. It was to M. Guichard's generous self-devotion that we owed our safe repose under his protection. My youngest brother, who had taken up his abode at Rive de Gier (M. Mazuyer's), came often to see us, and his arrival always filled our hearts with unalloyed delight, so that in the midst of our continual alarms we had some happy days.

M. Guichard's health became gradually worse and worse; he was confined to his chamber, and soon after that we lost him. He did not think his end was so near, for only the day before, while inhaling with delight the perfume

of a bunch of violets I had brought him, their fresh fragrance recalled forcibly to his mind the place of his birth, and he talked of the visit he meant to pay it as soon as he recovered. The next morning his last agony came on. Kneeling round his bed, we all joined in prayer ; and absorbed as we were in this new sorrow, and deeply impressed with the loss we were sustaining, we forgot everything else, and neglected all our precautionary measures.

My father all of a sudden saw a little boy come in, who had entered the house without difficulty, and who handed him a letter from the municipality of Lyons, directed to M. Guichard.

"He is dying," said my father ; "take it to the municipality of this suburb."

In a short time the little boy returned, and said :

"I found only one member there, and he said I must take this letter back to M. Guichard's house, as it must be opened there."

My father read the document ; it was a new writ issued against himself. He hastily scribbled a receipt for the messenger, who then departed. We never could learn who the person was who

so generously warned us of this new danger, and enabled us to avoid it. I know not how to express the depth of my gratitude to Almighty God for that providential care which placed in our way so many charitable souls, so many kind and watchful friends, ready to assist in the preservation of one so dear to us all.

We did not leave M. Guichard's house after his death, his widow treating us with as much kindness as he had done. Where could we have been better off? What other shelter could have offered us as many advantages?—a safe asylum and a faithful friend united to make it most desirable. We remained alone, those who had settled there with us having taken their departure. Repeated visits were made to our abode, to try and arrest our dear fugitive; but our cares always prevented their success; and this perhaps inspired us with a fool-hardy feeling of security in the midst of peril, to which he very nearly fell a victim one day, when he was taking the air in a shady walk in the beautiful garden belonging to the house. This garden, surrounded as it was with walls and rocks, could only be overlooked in one place, which he always carefully avoided; and

thinking himself safe as long as he observed this precaution, he often indulged himself with walking in the garden—a pleasure which I grudged him dreadfully, as it kept me in a constant fright about him.

Unhappily, it chanced one day that an emissary, who was in search of my father, came in by the garden-door, and found himself suddenly face to face with him, looking doubtless not a little startled. The commissary told him he was the bearer of an order of arrest ; but Madame Guichard, who was present, did not lose her presence of mind, but begged them both to follow her into her own room. When there, she opened her writing-desk, and offering the man her purse, said : “ Citizen, you are a father yourself ; save then, I entreat you, the life of a father of a family. This money is for you ; take it. You came in alone, and nobody has seen this gentleman, except those who will be sure to keep the secret.”

The man was compassionate, and departed quietly ; and after that, my father, in compliance with my earnest entreaties, promised that he would only go out at night.

Thus our days passed amidst constant

alarms and ceaseless persecution. Happily, my father found a powerful support in the attachment and generosity of his friends. He always gratefully acknowledged this ; but, nevertheless, life became a weariness to him, and continued restraint irritated his spirit. He continually looked on the beautiful garden, and felt he could not take a step in it ; it was like the trials of Tantalus. Deprived of all exercise, he grew feverish ; the natural vehemence of his character was increased by such constant opposition to his wishes : his temper became soured, and full of impatience and bitterness, he would invoke aloud liberty or death. Many a time has he said to me :

“ I would rather die than lead such a life as this. Let them drag me to the guillotine ; all will then be over, and this unbearable existence at an end.”

“ Think of me, my father,” I would reply ; “ think what would become of me in such a case.”

Most difficult did I often find it to calm him, and inspire him with the least hope or resignation ; and often when I seemed to have succeeded best, some fresh subject of irritation

would arise to destroy my work. At last, being unable to control himself any longer, and repeating that he would rather die than remain a close prisoner, he went out as usual into the garden, where very soon the spies, who still kept watch, caught sight of him.*

* About this time we set off on foot late one night, to give my father an excursion in the fresh air, and to see our good old friends the Chazières. I am glad to speak of them again, as the long space in my recital since I mentioned their names would appear ungrateful, if it is not considered that the fervour of my narration often carries me on without leaving me time to mention events in the order in which they occurred.

Having crossed the Saône, we arrived very early at the house of our old friends. I was deeply moved at once again beholding that hospitable roof. Magdalen, the light of the house! Magdalen was no longer there! Her pilgrimage was fulfilled early; but her short life was more full of acts of goodness and charity, than that of many a one who has borne "the burden and heat of the day." The others were unchanged. The gentle Dorothy came bounding to meet us, and her good mother seemed delighted to see us once again. Father Chazières seeing us so well received by his wife, greeted us kindly; indeed, now the Reign of Terror was passed, he had no cause for alarm. Even poor Peter knew us again, and appeared delighted at our coming; and, in my joy at seeing them all again, I even fancied

M. Guichard's successor, a strong Jacobin, most zealous for his party, immediately gave orders that one of his subordinates should execute a search in Madame Guichard's house, as, to his own great disgust, but very fortunately for us, he was obliged to depart immediately on a mission of great importance. The care of executing his orders devolved upon a commissary who was a better man than he took him for. He immediately went to a lady of our acquaintance, explained his commission to her, and begged her to give us timely warning.

"I know him to be at Madame Guichard's," he said, "and I only request that he may be sent away, or that I may be told his hiding place that I may not go near it."

As soon as we received this message, we took every care to conceal my father effectually,

that the old goat recognised us ! But, oh ! what a blank the absence of Magdalen made to my heart ! Her mother shed many tears as we talked of her beloved child, and mingled our regrets for her loss.

After passing some time with our friends, and wandering about the fields with them, imbibing the fresh air and sunshine, we took our leave of them sadly. We did not know if we should ever see them again ; and in truth we were parting for ever in this world !

moment, when a violent ring at the door-bell was heard, and a man appeared, wrapped in an immense cloak. He asked for my father. Good Mary Jane declared he was not in; the other servant said he was.

“I am his friend,” said the stranger, “do not be afraid of me. My name is Rostaing; go and announce it to him;” and in a moment he was admitted, and the door closed after him.

I know not if I have already spoken of him in this journal, but he was a brave old officer, as distinguished by his many virtues, as by his military prowess. He was just returned from a long journey, and having learnt the new persecution my father was enduring, had come to try and assist him. On our explaining our alarm to him, he entreated my father to leave the town at once.

“Come with me,” he said; “leave a house in which your presence is always suspected.”

“What! in broad daylight?” said my father.

“Any way you can. God will protect us. Such an existence as you are dragging on, can hardly be called life.”

This resolution, once taken, was speedily and were tremblingly awaiting the dangerous

executed. Mary Jane ran to secure a trusty boatman, who came with his boat to wait at the end of a narrow lane, opposite our house door. We watched for a moment when the street was clear ; my father rushed out, wrapped, like his friend, in a large cloak. He crossed the street with him ; entered the little bark, and rowed off. They soon passed the Seine, and were in comparative safety. We were left in much anxiety ; but trusted in the goodness of his cause. The commissary came at the time he had fixed, and hardly lifted up his eyes for fear of discovering my father. We *might* have told him to look about freely ; but it was as well that my father should still be supposed to be with us.

Had it not been for the lawsuit brought against my father by the authorities of Moulins, we should have shared in the liberty restored to all the men of Lyons in a mass. But far away, pursued with relentless vigour, and hunted from place to place, my poor father found himself only deprived of the privileges which others enjoyed, so that his disgust of life, and the bitterness of his spirit made him commit many imprudences. He could no

longer bear such constant disquiet. "Better die," he repeated constantly; and I could only sadly re-echo my former words: "What would become of *me*, my father?"

M. de Rostaing took my father straight to his own house. He staid there some time, and found a safe and pleasant shelter. Often enjoying the society of his friend, an old soldier like himself, his conversation revived many old recollections; and present sufferings were forgotten in their animated discussions of former battles.

My father's law-suit still continued. Unable to have me with him, he thought it wise to send me to Les Echerolles to see after his affairs; and, indeed, economy made this needful. I went back, then, escorted by a woman who returned immediately. All was going on as before; but this time I took possession of my mother's apartment, fully determined not to give it up to any one.

CHAPTER IX.

There's many a heart-wild singer,
 Like thy forsaken tower,
 Where joy no more may linger,
 Where love hath left his bower.
 And there's many a spirit e'en like thee,
 To mirth as lightly stirred,
 Though it soars from ruins in its glee,
 Oh, lonely, lonely, bird !

MRS. HEMANS.

DEATH OF MY SISTER—I VISIT MADAME DE GRIMAUD—
 INTERVAL OF HAPPINESS—BANISHMENT AND DISPERSION—
 JOURNEY TO LES ECHEROLLES—MY FELLOW-TRAVELLERS—
 I TAKE REFUGE WITH MADAME DE GRIMAUD—THEN WITH
 MADEMOISELLE MELON—VISITS TO MY COUSINS—PRIESTS—
 PILGRIMAGES.

I HAVE said, in the preceding chapter, that
 my father, being unable to keep me with him
 in the asylum friendship had offered him,

thought it prudent to send me back to Les Echerolles to see after his affairs, and revive the recollection of him in the hearts of some people who seemed inclined to forget him. I found the farmers continuing their banquets and their gains. Their luxury had increased with riches, and they might have been called happy, if constant uneasiness at the instability of their speculations had not mingled in all their joys. Their fortunes did indeed at last slip away altogether, and they found themselves as poor as they had been before they were rich, and far less happy. But I am anticipating.

Another source of uneasiness alarmed them now; a band of robbers which had sprung up in the midst of the province threatened all these newly-acquired fortunes, and, whilst almost alone in the house, I slept in perfect peace, M. Alix and his family hardly dared to go to bed. They were always on the watch for their own safety, preparing for defence, and shuddering at the slightest noise, in dread of sharing the fate of several of their neighbours who had been assassinated. All these alarms cast a dark shadow over their prosperity. I know not whether it were true, or merely an

endeavour of some envious people to disturb his happiness, but certain it is, a report was circulated that M. Alix's name was on the fatal list, and this idea banished sleep from his eyes.

My sister was still alive when I returned, but her existence was evidently drawing to a close. She was growing weaker and weaker every day, and she died of exhaustion at the age of twenty. The calomel taken by her wet-nurse when she was an infant had enfeebled her vital powers, and destroyed her reason ; a fatal example of the dangers to which a mother exposes her child, when she allows it to derive its nourishment from a stranger's breast. My mother never forgave herself for having done so, and it was a source of unceasing regret to her to the day of her death. Nevertheless, she had taken the greatest pains to ascertain the character of the nurse she chose ; but even her prudence was lulled to sleep by the recommendations she received of a woman who was cunning enough to impose upon any one, and her own health was never strong enough to enable her to nurse any of her children.

The short life of Odille was full of suffering.

Born healthy and beautiful, her many ailments soon altered her entirely, and I esteemed her happy when her troubles were ended. Nevertheless, although I could never receive from her a return of affection, her loss afflicted me, and made me feel more lonely from the void it left. Another death in my family brought my lost ones back to my mind, and I felt it was necessary for me to escape from the solitude in which I was left.

I went to spend some time with Madame Grimauld, with whom I was sure to find protection and cheerful society. She was at Lurey, an estate she had bought with the remains of that large fortune which her husband had almost entirely squandered away. He had been very handsome, but had led an infamous life. It was a love match, but Madame Grimauld, who married when very young, hardly enjoyed a day's happiness. The rest of her life was one constant trial, not only because of the licentious and extravagant conduct of her husband, but also from his sullen temper and spirit of irony and contradiction, which was unequalled, save by the patience of Madame Grimauld in bearing with him every hour of the day. Never

did a complaint escape her lips, nor did her most intimate friend ever hear her confess that she was unhappy. Her secret died with her.

My first acquaintance with such suffering formed an epoch in my life. I had had no time to contemplate a state of existence like this. Tempest-tossed amidst the troubles of my country, I had been, like many others, assailed by those overwhelming misfortunes which crushed everything before them, but at least I could speak of what I felt. Sorrow like Madame Grimauld's I had never seen before, silent but consuming sorrow, which saps the very sources of life, and secretly destroys the heart of which it takes possession. Her trial was the wearing away of a whole existence, revolving ceaselessly on upon sharp thorns, as constantly recurring, as the minutes themselves.

Obliged very soon to leave my excellent friend, I treasured up carefully the high and holy teachings with which her advice and example had enriched my soul. There was a powerful lesson contained in that speechless

misery, so real, so meekly borne, so little deserved.

In returning through Moulins I saw those of my relations who were interested in my fate, and then went back to Les Echerolles to await my father's orders. Time passed on, and having gained his lawsuit with the town of Moulins, he was able to reappear fearlessly, and take up his abode again at Vaise, where he summoned me to join him, which I did, accompanied by Barbara.

The government showing daily more toleration, many of those who had emigrated ventured to return to their native soil. My eldest brother (who had for long supported himself in Amsterdam by teaching French) rejoined us there. Some of these new arrivals had had their names erased from the proscribed list, at least temporarily, and all were expecting to do so. Many, however, mingling in the crowd, had braved all dangers from the imperious necessity they felt of once more breathing their native air, and had made no efforts to save themselves from the possible rigours of the existing laws ; but were there with the others,

and, like them, full of hope and security, and dreamt of nothing but happy family meetings, and discussions of past dangers by the domestic hearth.

They related—perhaps too boldly—all the adventures and vicissitudes of their past life. They had seen and suffered much, and had consequently much to relate ; all felt a bond of union in common misfortunes and common hopes, and all felt assured of future happiness. The gravest were carried away by the stream, and allowed themselves to be infected by the bright visions of the rest.

My youngest brother, who had been replaced in the Artillery by M. de Gueriot's unwearied kindness, was now quartered at Grenoble, which enabled him occasionally to come over to us. We were once again a family party, and the hope of being restored to his property increased the delight my father felt at having us once more around him. We felt nearly freed from all care, we were so very hopeful, and life passed quickly.

I rejoiced heartily in a state of happiness so new to me, little thinking how soon it would be

past and gone. This state of things hardly lasted three months; a new reaction destroyed our most cherished illusions, dispelled our hopes, and completed our ruin.

It was the 18th of Fructidor. I knew nothing of the history of that terrible time, save the necessity it imposed on me to fly once more, to tear myself from the arms of the father I idolised, and to resume that desolate and wandering life which was the worst of my misfortunes.

All who had not been positively erased from the proscribed list were ordered immediately to leave the French territory, where their presence had been hitherto tolerated. Passports were given them to the foreign country nearest to whatever place they chanced to be in, at the moment when this new revolutionary movement was decided upon. My father and my eldest brother had theirs made out for Switzerland. As for me, it was so well known that I had never left France (though my name was on the same list), that my father flattered himself this decree would not affect me, and decided on sending me back to Les Echerolles, in the vain

hope that my presence might possibly save some remnants of a fortune we were about to lose for ever.

Our preparations were soon made, for a very short time was allowed us for packing. As soon as places could be procured in the stage coach, my father placed me in it himself; and still accompanied by my faithful Barbara, I left Lyons a few hours before him. My youngest brother, I believe, entirely escaped this proscription, thanks partly to the feigned name under which he had long served, and partly to the generous friendship of M. de Gueriot.

This sudden separation had come upon us with all the suddenness of a dream, but the awakening to its stern reality was very hard. The public carriages could not contain the numbers of people who were escaping from Lyons. It was not only those who had once emigrated who were leaving the town in haste, but the friends and relations who had collected to see them, terrified at their danger, lost no time in hastening back whence they came. All those who were proscribed, however, did not fly the country. It is so difficult, when once the feet have again trod their native soil, to bid

them once more return into exile ! Many remained in spite of all decrees against them. Farewell, my father !—a long farewell to my sweet hopes, and fleeting joys, and all my bright delusions !—to father, brothers, hopes, one long farewell !

The coach set off. Except Barbara, I saw nothing but grave men around me, each of whom, no doubt, was like myself, regretting some friend or relation. We all kept silence till we could discover the political views of our companions ; and by degrees, every one appeared too utterly absorbed with his own thoughts to think about his neighbour. I myself long forgot where I was, as my mind wandered back over the vicissitudes of my past life. I was only drawn from my reverie by some cheerful words from a good old man, whose happy nature made him communicative, and broke the spell which rested upon us all. By little and little, a conversation began, which enabled us to see our way. We soon felt safe ; and without telling any secrets, we understood each other ; and we were confirmed in feeling we were all of the same mind by the sudden restraint which fell upon the whole party, when

a man got in, a few posts from Lyons, who was evidently a Jacobin of the first water.

The coaches were very different then from what they are now, and were slow and uncomfortable to the greatest degree. It was a good time for the innkeepers, for our coach made very short journeys each day, and stopped for two meals besides breakfast.

In those days, people had not brought matters to such a state of refinement as to go without dinner for twelve or fifteen hours, that they might do the more justice to their supper when they got it. Hours were so regular that, as the clock struck twelve, we always heard the voice of some obliging innkeeper exclaiming aloud, "The soup is on the table!" At eight o'clock at night, the same thing happened for supper. The whole concern, both men and horses, seemed accustomed to keep time to a moment. Unless some rare accident disturbed the ordinary course of things, they reached the appointed inns at a given instant; and rarely did any traveller, however little inclined to eat, resist the pressing invitation which announced "the soup is on the table."

Thus, at our first dinner halt, we were

received by the host with the most potent of arguments—I mean the soup tureen—which he placed himself on the table, repeating, at the same time, the usual words. Hardly was the first course brought up, when we discovered that one of our fellow-travellers was missing. It was a young man of very distinguished appearance, with a pleasant face and good manners. Could he have been taken ill? Hewas nowhere to be found. The carriage afterwards overtook him on the road where he was striding rapidly along. At night he supped well, which quieted our fears about him. The next day, at dinner-time, he disappeared again, and probably every one thought as I did, that he had gone off to eat his bit of dry bread by the side of some clear brook. Who knows even, poor youth, if he found a clear one? for brooks are not always limpid, except in novels.

“I beg your pardon,” said the good old man I have mentioned before, rising and holding his hat in his hand almost respectfully, “I wish to make an observation to you. We have, doubtless, an unhappy man amongst us. Will you then authorise me to invite him, in the name of the company, to come and share a repast

which we do not enjoy unless he is partaking of it?"

He spoke in an anxious and entreating voice, and we all agreed to his proposition almost before he had finished his last words. He left us immediately, sought vainly for our companion, and returned without having found him; but the coachman said we should soon overtake him, as he had gone on before.

The next morning, Barbara and I were to leave the other travellers; but two gentlemen who were going on to Auvergne as well as the youth, promised not to let him run off so in future. He re-entered the coach. I had not been hungry at dinner-time, but I had supplied myself with provisions to eat in the carriage. I offered some to every one with a smile at my own fancies; but all refused to eat anything, and even the one who had not dined would not accept a morsel.

We arrived that night at Roanne, where he supped heartily; and I took rather a sorrowful leave of my fellow-travellers, feeling I should never see any of them again, but somewhat comforted to think the young man would get some dinner on the morrow.

I had taken a carriage to myself to go to Les Echerolles. At daybreak, when I was just ready to get into it, my landlady appeared, and said :

“Madam, amongst your fellow-travellers to this place, there is one in great distress, and I am come to implore some little assistance for him.”

“That poor young man !” cried I. “I was afraid it was so, because he would not come in to dinner !”

“It is not the young man, Madam, it is the old man.”

“What ! that good man, who first suspected the other’s distress ? He was so cheerful too !”

“He is a priest,” replied the landlady, “and forced to leave Lyons. He knows not where to go, and has absolutely *nothing*. In this desolate state, he opened his heart to me last night. He has no refuge to seek, and no means to continue his journey. I am going to try to find him a safe shelter till better times come. I have already collected something for him from those who came in the coach with you. They all seem kind.”

“ Ah !” thought I to myself, “ he understood another’s misery by his own ; and the one we pitied most, had really less to bear than he.”

The next day I arrived at Les Echerolles. Hardly had I greeted my old nurse once again, and crossed our own threshold, when the mayor sent me a private warning to depart immediately, because, as my name was on the proscribed list, I was included in a law which admitted of no exceptions. He begged me to spare him the pain of putting this law in execution, and having me transported from station to station till I was out of the republican territories. Oh, my father ! why had I been forced to leave you ? I once more parted from my faithful nurse ; and leaving Barbara at Les Echerolles that very night, I quitted my paternal roof for ever, escorted by the gardener Vernière.

I went to Lurcy, to Madame Grimauld. I thought I could do this with safety for both of us, because her estate was not in the same department as Les Echerolles, and it was well known that I often went there. Her reception was as kind and affectionate as ever ; and Josephine

received me as a cherished sister, but M. Grimauld seemed disturbed by my coming. I could not wonder at him, for I was, indeed, a suspected person, although I had never left France. My name being on the proscribed list made me a marked character, and might even, though I was so young, compromise those who received me into their houses.

In truth, the times were perilous ; the Reign of Terror seemed likely to return. Its adherents, once more in power, did not spare their threatenings. Alarming reports were spread, one of which excited terror in the firmest hearts—namely, that a law was to be passed, ordering the exile of all the relations of those who had emigrated from France. This law, once put in execution, would have given immense latitude to our persecutors ; and every one, as well as myself, often pictured to themselves its results, and how we might be conveyed forcibly from station to station till we reached the frontiers of France, and had to transport our misery far beyond seas. It was not even stated whether we should be allowed to choose the place of our exile. I confess, that in spite of the calmness consequent upon so many losses, as well as

upon the feeling that I had little to dread, I should have felt it very hard to be compelled to go to America, instead of joining my father in Switzerland. This law was never passed after all, great as had been the alarm it caused. Everybody escaped with the fright, and the innumerable conjectures in which each had indulged about it.

Perceiving at once the alarm I caused, I immediately announced my intention of returning to Mademoiselle Melon, to whom I wrote directly to ask her leave, and to beg of her to send for me. I could remain a few days at Lurcy without any risk, as its situation, far away from all high roads, sheltered me from troublesome visitors. I am even certain that if my kind friend had been alone, she would never have allowed me to leave her. M. Grimauld, reassured by hearing that my stay was not likely to be long, gave a very gracious consent to my visit; and shortly after went to Nevers, where he wished to inspect a house, and near it a small estate he meant to take in exchange for Lurcy. This place, which I have since visited, was merely a pretty house in a large garden; but he declared he should gain

prodigiously by the exchange. It was by this method of enriching himself, that he had dissipated a capital of thirty thousand dollars, and was conducting his wife and daughter to complete ruin; but Madame Grimauld seemed to have lost all power of offering any opposition to his plans. Josephine went with her father, so we remained alone.

One day when we had just finished dinner, it was announced to my cousin that a gentleman, who would not give his name, insisted on seeing her. She went to meet the stranger, who said a few words to her in a low voice, and expressed a great wish to see M. Grimauld, who, he said, knew him very well. He seemed much to regret his absence, gave his name as Le Brun, and appeared desirous of being invited to remain. Madame Grimauld hesitated a little, and her cold and scrutinising looks showed me that she felt suspicious of him; however, at last she begged him to sit down, and hearing he had not dined, sent for a tray of refreshments. He ate heartily, talked modestly, mentioned several places where he had seen M. Grimauld, and related several anecdotes about them. My cousin, however, still looked

very doubtful. He said he had returned from emigration without a sixpence, had no home to go to, and depended entirely on the charity of right-minded people. My heart warmed to him directly I heard that he had emigrated ; for my own father and brothers might even then be asking assistance from strangers.

He wore a shabby great coat of light blue cloth : his words were reserved, but in his voice there was an earnest tone of entreaty. He related his misfortunes, and spoke of the perils he had passed through ; but all in vain, for my friend was not the least moved. I was greatly astonished to see her so unlike herself ; for she seemed to me unkind and harsh, and doubtless the stranger thought so too, for he rose to go. As he took leave, he asked her by what road M. Grimauld would return. She told him one in the opposite direction to the real one, and bade him good-bye. I have since thought he only asked that he might not run the chance of meeting him. Then, however, I laid wait for the stranger at the door, and giving him two dollars (without looking at him for fear of making him blush), I said : " Sir, I have only a sovereign left, but I beg you to accept half of it."

He bowed low, and departed in silence.

I returned to the drawing-room, happy in having done a kindness, and I then ventured to ask Madame Grimauld what had made her so inhospitable.

“That man,” said she, “was not what he pretended to be. No one who has emigrated, would wear a great coat of the same colour as the soldiers of the Prince de Condé. He is well-dressed, his linen is clean, his stockings are neatly mended, in short nothing in him is like a man who is hiding himself. He looks to me much more like a spy and an intriguer, who takes advantage of the miseries of the time to live upon people’s compassion; and I was determined not to tell him by what road my husband would return.”

I had not remarked any of the things she mentioned, because the man interested me. I thought my friend’s prudence very dry, and her charity very cold. I forgot how much experience she had had. Many sharpers in those days drew a rich harvest from circumstances. All bore great names, or loaded themselves with imaginary misfortunes, secure of finding plenty of support from some of the families of persecuted nobles. A great talent for intrigue and

artifice made their success almost certain ; they made themselves thoroughly acquainted with every particular in the history of the families they visited, and then invented long accounts of the exiled relations of those families ; relating conversations, so cleverly adapted to the real characters of each, that it was impossible to doubt the truth of these accounts, and their dupes were very numerous in consequence. In after years I became aware of my friend's wisdom, though at the time I refused to believe in such utter hypocrisy.

Soon afterwards, I found myself once more established in the niece's room at L'Ombre. My aunt received me with great kindness. I have already described her mode of life, so will not return to the subject ; but merely remark that one great change had taken place in my absence—the moderation of the government had caused the churches to be re-opened for the priests who had taken the oaths ; they were still profiting by this permission, and the parish priest of the parish of L'Ombre was now able to say mass publicly on Sundays and holidays. I took advantage of the good temper in which I found Mademoiselle Melon, to beg her to excuse my attending it, as my father's opinions

and my own separated us from those who had ceased to render obedience to the See of Rome. She assured me I should be left at liberty to do as I pleased, as she thought it fair that every one should follow the dictates of their own conscience. This point once gained, I felt at ease and almost happy at my aunt's, who treated me with a degree of kindness I can never forget. She even allowed me to pay some visits to several of my relatives, no one in that retired part of the country having an idea that my name was on the proscribed list, into which they had probably never looked. Amongst others, she permitted me to visit M. Le Blanc de l'Espinasse. His eldest daughter was dead; but her younger sister seemed to have inherited all her love for me. I knew her a little already, and I must reckon the friendship of this kind family amongst the best blessings that Providence has bestowed upon me.

Their house was the abode of peace, where truly patriarchal virtues were put in practice in the simplest way. The father and daughter were both deeply religious without taking the slightest credit to themselves for it, as they really did not suppose it possible to be otherwise. I have

nowhere seen so much love for virtue, combined with such indulgence towards all who thought differently from themselves. They had learnt from their Lord to live in hope of the conversion of all sinners. Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse, as pious as a sister of charity, was dressed very like one; her dislike to the world and to its ways having made her garb as simple as theirs; but no one could be struck by her attire, so entirely did it seem a part of herself. Busied with the direction of her father's household, she devoted all her spare time to works of mercy and to prayer. Her faith was so fervent, that she was not crushed by affliction; her spirit, strong in a higher strength than her own, suffered, no doubt, but did not sink. Her life flowed gently on, and deeming herself inferior to every one, she was in ignorance of the blessings she bestowed; as a little brook, that in its silent course fertilizes unconsciously all the meadows through which it passes; while her humble mind discerned only her own faults and her friends' good qualities.

I need not repeat that a religious atmosphere pervaded Le Battoué (the place M. Le Blanc inhabited, within a few miles of Nevers), what

I have said of his goodness, as well as that of his daughter, will clearly prove it. A great attention to religious duties was especially remarkable there. Instructed and invigorated by my cousin's example, and encouraged by her, I found in that abode of piety the assistance of which I had long stood in need. My soul there received the best spiritual food, for it was enlightened by the Word of God. In that family, where the Holy Scriptures were read daily, my young mind was formed to upright and noble thoughts, combined with that perfect simplicity which is ever inseparable from truth.

I was fortunate enough to be a frequent dweller under that hospitable roof, and was always received with that unceremonious friendliness which puts one at ease at once, by making one feel at home ; and for which I cannot refrain from offering my grateful acknowledgments, through this, the only channel open to me, though at the risk of putting my cousin's modesty to the blush.

M. Le Blanc had had the honour of being imprisoned during Robespierre's life, but afterwards, being restored to liberty, he returned to his old home, whither the poor soon found their

way as of yore, to share in his liberal hospitality.

Nevers contained many on whom all the rigours of the law had fallen. A great number of priests, whose consciences would not allow them to take the oaths, had concealed themselves there during the Reign of Terror, only emerging at night from their hiding places to attend the sick. Some, being discovered in the act of exercising their apostolic functions ; and others, betrayed by treacherous friends, paid for their self-devotion with their lives ; but some yet remained for the comfort of true Christian souls.

The life of these men of God was indeed a hard one. Buried in narrow dens, deprived of exercise, and sometimes even of air and light, many fell victims to their sufferings. M. Le Blanc, full of compassion for them, sought to give them some assistance, and it was soon arranged that they should come by turns to Le Battoué, to breathe a purer air, and gain a little strength by the change. They always both came and went in the night, and their presence was not known even to all the servants in the house ; so that as it was not very large, there

was a constant system of vigilance established, which was not without its charm, for the human mind loves excitement of all sorts, and the continual alarms in which we lived, made our days pass rapidly.

We had to be constantly on the *qui vive* ; to think of everything, to observe everything, never to be taken by surprise, whatever happened. My cousin watched like an anxious mother over her charge, the least noise roused her suspicions. When any pressing danger was averted, the success recompensed us amply for the previous hours of anxiety ; we could even laugh gaily at those we had deceived, and delighted with our victory, we prepared bravely for the next struggle.

Oh, those were good times ! I repeat it, those were happy days, and good times for me ! how my life fled by *then*, every moment of it being occupied by a strong interest ; besides, I was loved and protected there, and even my weak powers were able to be of some little use in watching over and protecting others even more unfortunate than myself. My memory ever reverts gratefully to those days. Oh, Maria ! suffer me then to dwell upon them a little longer !

We all got up very early to hear mass in a little chapel adjoining the drawing-room. My cousin had accustomed every one in the house to see her go into it at all hours, and even burn a light there, for she often spent part of the night in prayer. This pious custom enabled us to meet there at any hour, without its appearing strange, or exciting any suspicion. Thus we had baptisms performed there several times, and once a marriage, separating as noiselessly as we had met.

The danger attached to these mysterious meetings increased their solemnity. Kneeling on the stones amid the stillness of early morning, our prayers were unusually fervent; the voice of the holy priest speaking in low and earnest tones, sent conviction to our hearts, and our spirits were elevated towards Heaven. These nocturnal meetings reminded us of the persecutions endured by the early Christians, and we fancied that they imparted to us a little of their zeal.

I remember a relation of M. Le Blanc's, who was one of the great men of that day, arriving once on a visit. He was a zealous partisan of the existing government, and we did not

know how far we might trust him, so it was decided to hear mass very early in the morning. Hardly had it began, however, when, though it was only four o'clock, we heard our friend stalking up and down the drawing-room. M. Le Blanc immediately went up to the priest, and said softly : " Sir, you are overheard ; read lower—take care !" but the priest being deaf, took no heed, and went on just as loud as ever. The stranger continued his walk, either did not or would not hear, and departed without touching the door he could so easily have opened. I could find a great deal more to tell about those exciting days, for in the midst of our anxieties we had often most amusing scenes.

One day, when we were playing at cards to amuse our poor deaf guest—(Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse, a cousin who was staying in the house, and myself, making up the party) a faithful servant rushed in to warn us that a lady in the neighbourhood was coming up to pay a visit on foot by a path not usually frequented, and that she would be in the room in a moment.

" Oh, what an inquisitive woman !" exclaimed my cousin. " She is come to surprise us ! Quick—quick, Sir : leave the room !"

"Well, what is the matter?" cried the old priest.

"Hush, hush!—go gently; but be quick!"

"Oh, I understand!" he exclaimed aloud, in his gruff voice: "some one is coming!" And pushing back his chair with a crash, he marched noisily out of one door just as the other opened to our visitor.

"Let us hide this basket of counters," she added, hastily. "They will not heed the cards."

And as we got up to receive the lady, we took care to mix up the cards all in a heap, which was carried away to make room for a luncheon tray.

Such surprises were of daily occurrence. Sometimes visitors came to dinner, which confined our guests to their rooms without being able to stir, as the said rooms were supposed to be uninhabited. We had then to carry them their dinners ourselves, and invented a hundred devices to delude the new-comers.

Our recluses, who were enjoying their little bit of liberty all the more for having been so long deprived of it, used to murmur at this constraint, and would insist on going into the

woods to breathe freely. Thereupon we used to try and release them. M. Le Blanc would entertain some of our visitors in one corner, his cousin the rest. One of us would keep the door shut a moment, and our prisoners hastened by to the woods whilst the coast was clear, and plunged into the thickets till the signal came which we had agreed should inform them of our tiresome guest's departure. Their carriages once safely out of hearing, I used to shut up my little dog in my own room, and then running into the wood, pretend to hunt everywhere for her, calling her all the time as loud as I could, which brought our good old priests out of their hiding-places. The absurd part of the story was that my little dog's name was Coquette, and we have had many a good laugh at the grave figures which answered to the name.

A thousand little incidents of this sort made us merry, and I was delighted to take advantage of them; for being naturally fond of laughing, I often felt a sort of need of giving vent to my mirth. All the good spirits of my youth, so often suffocated in tears, now burst forth afresh; and I often made the old priests

join in my mirth. Merriment is infectious when it is of the right sort, and it did us all good.

One night, one of these gentlemen arrived, who was so short-sighted that he could hardly see his way. His guide had left him at the door; but he only came to beg for supper, being obliged to leave us immediately afterwards, as he was expected elsewhere.

"What am I to do?" he exclaimed. "I see very little by daylight, but not at all when it is dusk! and I do not know the cross roads. If I were once safe on the high road, I could manage, as it would be all straightforward."

"He will take every bush for a man," whispered Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse to me, "and will fall over every mole-hill. I have no safe guide for him, Alexandrine. Dare you come with me as far as the high road—it is barely three miles?"

"Certainly," said I. "I am quite willing."

"I will call the gardener as we go out," added my cousin, "that we may not be quite alone; but I will not speak to him beforehand, for he is both timid and fond of gossip."

It was very dark when we set out ; and as we passed before the house of the gardener, Jervelle, we called to him to follow us, which he did, without knowing what we were after. Seeing us go on and on, he began to wonder and to be a little frightened, for Jervelle was not brave.

“Mademoiselle, if you had only told me,” he cried, “I could have brought some weapon of defence with me.”

“We are in no danger, Jervelle !”

“Nay, Mademoiselle, we may meet people or strange dogs, and I have not even a stick !”

He was beginning to indulge in all sorts of dismal suppositions, when he remarked my white gown, and exclaimed :

“Oh, Mademoiselle ! if you are all in white, I am not afraid. People will take you for a spirit, and if they see you, will be sure to run away.”

“Well done, Jervelle,” I replied, with a smile. “Then I suppose I had better say I am come from purgatory to preach repentance to them.”

We reached the high road without any diffi-

culties, however, and came back quite safely, after having seen our guest well out of the wood.

Sometimes we would escort one of the priests on his road to administer the last sacrament to some sick man. We would walk humbly after him, singing litanies and chants in a low voice. The woods enclosed us in their deep shadows, and their green aisles sheltered no traitors. No echo repeated our sacred songs to any treacherous ears. Thus the holy man, escorted only by feeble women and children, passed safely through the solitary paths to those who needed his assistance. Kneeling in the sick man's chamber, our timid voices would join in the responses of the service; and leaving that humble dwelling, cheered and brightened by words of peace, we would return whence we came, murmuring still, as we passed along the forest roads, our hymns of adoration and of love.

CHAPTER X.

Yet even in youth companionless I stood,
 As a lone forest bird 'mid ocean's foam,
 For me the silver cords of brotherhood
 Were early loosed : the voices from my home
 Passed one by one, and melody and mirth
 Left me a dreamer by the silent hearth.
 But with the fulness of a heart that burned
 For the deep sympathies of mind, I turned
 From that unanswering spot, and fondly sought
 In all wild scenes with thrilling murmurs fraught
 A perilous delight. For then awoke
 My life's lone passion—the mysterious quest
 Of secret knowledge.

* * * * *

Oh, for gifts more high !
 For a seer's glance to read mortality !
 For a charmed rod to call for each dark shrine
 The oracles divine !

MRS. HEMANS.

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE—DEATH OF MADAME GRIMAUD—RETURN
 TO L'OMBRE — MADEMOISELLE MELON CHANGED TOWARDS
 ME — INTRIGUES AGAINST ME—MY BROTHER'S VISIT —
 YOUNG'S "NIGHT THOUGHTS"—I QUIT L'OMBRE—JOSEPHINE.

WHEN I left Le Battoué, I found as kind
 a reception at M. de Chaligni's, Mademoi-

selle Melon's nephew, who, with his youngest son and daughter, had been for a time imprisoned. All my relations seemed to rival each other in making amends to me for my sufferings by their active kindness. I shall never forget the extreme delicacy with which Madame de Brèze, M. de Chaligni's daughter, discovering the extent of the privations I was undergoing, insisted on sharing all she possessed with her poor friend. She showed me a sister's love, which is expressing, in one word, all the care they took of me. Her kindness never failed, and she gave me many a happy day in that small habitation of Le Mont, whither her father had retired with her and her youngest brother when the opening of the prisons released them, and allowed them once more to breathe the pure air of their own mountains. They found their house entirely despoiled, and so denuded of all furniture, that a box turned upside down was their only table for their first meal in it—indeed, the only thing left by the spoilers.

The way in which this excellent family received me is graven on my heart, and I delight in retracing the time when my sufferings

showed me how many true and faithful friends I had with whom I might have taken up my abode without ever being made to feel my presence a burden.

There was then a charm in the intercourse between the noble families in France, of which their returning fortunes afterwards deprived them; for, in resuming their old position, many of them lost by degrees the peculiar virtues which the similarity of their sufferings called forth in the days when, the same trials borne, the same privations suffered, had made them equal in reality.

Every one felt a yearning to share with their former companions in misfortune, the new feelings of relief, and to enjoy the good days with those with whom they had shared the evil ones. Their houses were in wretched plight, it is true; but no one was fastidious, and the delight of being once more at home made up for all that was wanting. Happiness made people sociable; they wished to see and congratulate each other. No one was uneasy at not having accommodation enough; if there were more people than rooms, the young men

slept upon straw; the ladies did the best they could; every one laughed merrily at such little discomforts, and the next day found us all as happy as the preceding one had left us. The tables were always spread with the simplest food; the pleasure of being free was the best condiment; too happy to enjoy the present without thinking of the future, we shared all our pleasures to double their value.

When this first intoxication of joy had subsided, and by dint of time, economy and solicitations, peoples' fortunes began to get right again, this cordiality disappeared. The inequality of rank and fortune disturbed the harmony which reigned before, and when once pride took the ascendant, the easy intercourse which had made life pass so pleasantly vanished away. Egotism and vanity resumed their old sway over many hearts, and ambition very often conquered love. Thus ended the happy time which made a golden age between two iron ones!

About this time I had the misfortune of losing Madame Grimauld. She died at the moment when she was leaving Lurcy to go to Nevers. I obtained leave to go to Josephine,

to mourn with her one who had been a mother to us both. I spent the little time she remained at Lurcy with her, and then returned to L'Ombre sadly enough.

After leaving such truly kind friends, life seemed very desolate; it was the barrenness of exile. There was nothing to fill the heart or to improve the soul. My aunt's house offered the sad picture of a merely animal existence, without any rational conversation to brighten it; only varied by domestic quarrels, conflicting interests and reciprocal calumnies. The numerous household, who seldom even saw their mistress, had left off respecting her. Mademoiselle Melon, hardly ever leaving her own room, was quite ignorant of the revolutions which disturbed the peace of her little empire; and as she only saw with the eyes of her maid Barbara, and gave all her orders through her, they were very often unjust, and were stoutly resisted.

That maid made herself a terror to all, and she was hated as much as feared. I did not for a long time know the extent of her power, or rather her abuse of it, for I kept aloof from all the intrigues that went on, really feeling

afraid of knowing them. Contented with possessing my aunt's affection, which I saw increasing towards me every day, and took the greatest pains to deserve, I endeavoured to make myself agreeable to her by every means that could be devised by a very grateful heart and naturally lively spirits. When I left her room, I used to pass quickly to my own apartment, without stopping to look about me. Dreading to witness the utter disorder of the establishment, I only left my apartment to take a solitary walk and return to my aunt. This existence was calm, though monotonous, and I was getting accustomed to it ; but it did not last long.

The kindness Mademoiselle Melon showed me was distasteful to two people—the priest, whom I had offended by refusing to go to mass, and Barbara, who dreaded a rising power that might rival her own. My aunt all at once became cold and dry in her manner towards me, and unaccountable caprices rendered my situation very uncomfortable. What pleased her one day displeased her the next ; when she followed the dictates of her own heart, I was

well received, but perhaps an hour after she would coldly repulse me.

My aunt's displeasure seemed to increase with time, but she entered into no explanations, and I dared not ask her what was the matter. I studied to please her in every thought, word, and action, but I could not succeed. I then had recourse to Barbara, and said to her :

“As you know my aunt so well, let me beg you to tell me what I can do to please her, and it shall be my study to accomplish it.”

The artful girl, however, only abused my confidence, and gave me wrong advice, well pleased to have found so easy a way of breaking off a friendship which alarmed her. When my aunt wished to be alone, Barbara would advise me to go to her ; and when she wanted me, I received a hint not to go near her, so that I acted just contrary to her real wishes. I remember once being shut up for a week in my own room, because I was told my aunt's door was shut against me. Meantime, Barbara represented me to her as ungrateful and obstinate,

because while I was receiving her generous hospitality, I would not even pay her the common attentions due to the mistress of the house, even had she not been my aunt and my benefactress.

When she thought she had made her really angry, she would then ask her still to pity me, and try me once more, remembering my desolate position. Mademoiselle Melon's own kind heart always pleaded for me ; and as soon as ever I was recalled, I hastened to appear before her, too glad of a kind reception to think of asking the reason of my past disgrace. My aunt hated explanations, and never alluded to the subject, so I trusted the deceitful calm till the next tempest came to threaten my little vessel. Thus by repeated efforts, my enemy gradually undermined my aunt's affection for me, and made my very presence a burden to her.

Being confined so much to my own room, I had not perceived that Barbara was often tipsy. On those occasions she would pay no attention to my aunt's bell ; and when rebuked for it afterwards, would declare she had no time to come, because I could do nothing

for myself, and kept her in my room performing a thousand little services for me. My aunt, very justly provoked with me, was crosser than ever, without my having an idea of the cause, for no one ever waited on me, Barbara (as I afterwards heard) objecting to do so. It was by very gradual degrees that my aunt was brought to hate the orphan she had so kindly sheltered; but fraud and envy mix their slow poisons with a sure hand, and detect but too accurately the vulnerable points to which they may apply them.

My aunt began going to mass again on purpose, I believe, to reproach me for my want of piety when she returned. The priest, who hoped to conquer my aversion to him, spoke much to me of the influence he had over my aunt, and tried to shake what he called my philosophical way of taking things, by assuring me he could induce Mademoiselle Melon to make a will in my favour. "I have no right to it," I used to say to him; "she has nearer heirs," and then I would relapse into my usual silence, and not demean myself by answering his crafty words.

I had no accounts of my father. Isolated

and oppressed, my thoughts were often very sad. Where were my troubles to end? when would the evening of my dreary day of existence come? The time seemed very long, and I was very weary of my life. My health, undermined by melancholy, began to fail, and I faded gradually away, without books or friends to cheer me. My memory sometimes added to my sorrows, by bringing up before me some poet's vivid descriptions of the joys of youth, and made me weep the more bitterly at the contrast of my feelings, though now only in my eighteenth year.

• God's watchful eye is ever over His children, ready to send comfort in the utmost need; and a most unexpected consolation reached me, now that my heart was failing me altogether. My youngest brother, of whose abode and prospects I was entirely ignorant, came to see me unexpectedly. Although he was on the proscribed list, he had continued in the army, having entered it under a feigned name. He was on his road from Italy to Brittany. The journey was a long one; and as the pay of a lieutenant in the artillery was not much, he found it convenient to travel great part of the way on foot.

I was the more delighted to see him, because I found that it was the wish to come and see what had become of me, which made him apply for leave to change his quarters.

This dear and welcome visitor seemed to infuse new life into me, and my aunt received him very graciously. The eight days he spent with me seemed one long holiday ; what with our happy walks together, and our cosy fire-side conversations. We opened our hearts to each other without reserve. One thing only did we try reciprocally to conceal—our poverty. He thought I wanted money, and pretended to be very rich, that he might persuade me to take some ; and I on the other hand did the same, fearing to deprive him of what he needed more than I. I succeeded in preventing his making me any present. And having a small sum of money by me, I carefully concealed it among his clothes. He never discovered it till he was too far away to attempt to return it to me, so for once I succeeded ; but in general my brother gave me half of whatever he had. His affection readily divined what I was most in want of ; and I have no doubt he very often deprived himself of many necessary things to

procure it for me. I cannot say how much his kindness brightened my solitary life.

I lived upon his letters for a long time ; but they came with difficulty all across La Vendée, for he was then at Port Louis. The robbers, scattered along the road, often intercepted his letters ; and I sank back again into my former loneliness. I sought to amuse myself a little by studying Italian, which one of the priests who came to Le Battoué had begun to teach me ; but I had no book in that language, except a translation of Young's "Night Thoughts." I read them with eagerness ; the melancholy which pervaded them harmonised well with the tone of my mind. They had a great effect upon a young imagination, which, weary of its own fruitless activity, was very much thrown back upon itself. The grand metaphors and striking beauties which they contained excited my admiration. I threw myself boldly into the immense expanse they opened to me, and was enchanted even with the dark descriptions Young is so fond of.

Raised far above this earth, my imagination soared away into eternity ; but as it had nothing to check it, and as the vigour of my thoughts

appeared to increase in freedom in proportion to the constraint in which I lived, I sank under the weight of the speculations which arose in my soul, and my body daily became weaker. I felt happy to think I was approaching my end. Many a time, while weighing in my thoughts what life was, and what death would be, I have spent whole nights seated by the fire which lighted up my solitary cell ; and absorbed in these meditations, my soul and spirit strove to exalt, themselves into that region where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

Oftentimes did the air appear to me purer and lighter, as I enjoyed the utter repose and silence round me, and could say to myself : “ All other mortals are sleeping ; my spirit is free.”

I need not here enter into minute details of the trouble every day brought with it, nor dwell further on the underhand measures which at last led to an open rupture. I did not understand them till long afterwards. When I did, Mademoiselle Melon’s conduct appeared to me very excusable ; and I sincerely regretted having resented her bitter speeches

too warmly. Nevertheless, I could not have hoped to struggle for any length of time against a power which enthralled my aunt herself; and when she said plainly to me that it was most unpleasant to her to have under her own roof a young person who suited her so little as I did, I saw at once that I must go, and immediately took measures for my departure.

I did not leave her, however, without assuring her that I should ever retain a grateful recollection of her kindness in past years, or without begging leave to come and see her from time to time to assure her of this—a permission which she granted very graciously.

Knowing my state of utter dependence, I believe my aunt thought my resolution was merely the effect of temporary vexation; for she seemed both surprised and sorry when she saw me about to depart, and even said so plainly; but her harsh words were yet sounding in my ears, and nothing would have induced me to alter my mind. I asked her to forgive me anything I had done to offend her; and she was touched by my words, so that we both shed tears at parting. After a time, Barbara's in-

fluence moved my aunt to write me some very harsh letters ; but her natural generosity of mind conquered at last, and she received me very kindly when I came to pay my respects to her once again. To conclude this melancholy episode, I must add that this woman's arrogance became so great, that Mademoiselle Melon, weakened by her great age, and feeling she had no longer strength to break the yoke herself, was obliged to call in her nephew, M. de Chaligni, to send away a servant who so entirely forgot her position. The haughty Barbara was replaced by a good and gentle successor, and my aunt, once more enjoying the calm of which she had so long been deprived, spent the last years of her life very peacefully, saw how she had been deceived, and did me full justice.

I went to Nevers to Josephine. I had heard nothing of her for long ; for she feared to alarm me by informing me of her real state, which drew tears from my eyes. Josephine could not walk alone. She had been to the nearest watering-place to seek a cure for the rheumatism, which had settled in one leg ; but she came back, unable to move, except on

crutches. It grieved me much not to be able to stay and nurse her ; but it was possible that my being on the proscribed list might be known at Nevers ; so I hastened again into the country, sad as was my parting with so dear a friend. Very soon she got so much worse, that she was thought to be in a consumption : grief had ruined her health. She wrote me word that she was going to Paris, and I came back to see her once more.

Her father was weary of seeing her suffer, and sent her on a vain search after new remedies. He no longer cared for her, since he had extorted from her a will in his own favour.

“ Josephine,” I often said to her, “ keep your fortune in your own hands, for your father’s good as well as your own. You will die in poverty if you surrender all to him.”

“ I shall not live long enough” she replied. But she lingered to experience many a hard trial ; for he gave her over, as it were, to the care of strangers. She entreated him to come to Paris. He replied that he was busy with the hay. The doctor wrote to desire him not to lose a moment, if he wished to see his daughter.

alive, and he replied he would come the moment his affairs were sufficiently settled. "Do not give way to melancholy," he wrote to Josephine; "do not believe the doctors; go to the play, drink champagne, and be merry."

Happily for her the letter never reached her, for she was at rest before it arrived.

I have anticipated a little in relating the death of my friend, whose greatest sorrows were caused by her father. Whilst she was on her death-bed at Paris, the days as they passed on brought fresh troubles in their train. The law of Hostages, that iniquitous proceeding, unequalled even in the Reign of Terror, threatened the personal safety of individuals, none of whom were secure from the most arbitrary accusations. Thus M. Le Blanc was made to serve as hostage with three of the most respectable people in the neighbourhood, because some way from Le Battoué a woman had been murdered, of whose very existence they were ignorant!

The three neighbours escaped, knowing how little innocence availed in those days. My cousin wanted her father to fly also, but he refused.

"I will not run away from any such ab-

surdity," he said. "If I must go to prison, I will; it is not so long since I have been there!"

"Do at least hide yourself, my father," pleaded Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse, "let me have the charge of watching over your safety. It is not for yourself—it is for my brother's sake and for your children!"

He yielded at last to his daughter's entreaties, and she immediately set about concealing them, for there was another besides her father, a good old priest, living with them under an assumed name, who might probably share the fate of M. Le Blanc if he were arrested.

At the first rumour of his arrest, as well as of the three other securities, that which was heard in Nevers, a friend of M. Le Blanc's came in haste to give him warning, that he might be prepared for the worst. He arrived in the middle of the night, and soon roused the house. I was astonished at the noise I heard, but hearing the steps of all I knew in the house, I comforted myself by thinking none of them were ill, and lay still trying to go to sleep again, feeling sure I should be called if I were wanted. Accordingly, in a few minutes my cousin came

into my room, saying I must get up as my room was required. When she had told me her plans, we agreed that if any one came to disturb us, I should go to bed again, and act the part of an invalid.

The house was in a state of siege : no one entered without a countersign, and at the approach of danger each had his appointed post to defend. We went on in this way for three days, but no one came ; the measure was probably reckoned premature, and we returned to our usual mode of life after this little alarm.

When I ceased to be uneasy about my benefactors, my mind reverted to my own cares. I had no accounts of my father, or of my eldest brother. My youngest, after an unsuccessful expedition, had been put into prison in Edinburgh where he languished for eight months, and I was very miserable about him, when I received a letter from himself, announcing his release and his intention of returning to Paris. A few days after, I saw a young soldier, with a knapsack on his back, arrive at M. de Chaligni's house, where I then was—it was himself! Such delightful moments made one forget years of suffering. He was well and joyous ;

and opening his purse, showed me fifty shining gold pieces. I knew he had saved nothing, that even his pay had been stopped, and that he had been supported in prison by a subscription amongst his comrades. Whence then this money ?

“ Oh, Chambolle ! is it your own ? ”

“ Certainly it is ; my very own. ”

“ Without having robbed the mail ? ” (Not an uncommon amusement in those days !)

“ How dare you mention such a thing ? I have won it ! Josephine thought me mad when I insisted on delaying my departure to await the drawing of the lottery in which I had invested my last coin. I was not so mad after all. I returned her the money she had lent me for the journey, and have plenty still left for you ! ”

He staid but a short time, and then, with his knapsack over his shoulder, he went merrily on to Grenoble, where our valuable friend, M. Guériot, offered him a place.

It was about this time that the return of General Bonaparte took place, who passing rapidly through France, reached Paris unexpectedly, and soon effected many changes in the

government. Some prophesied his rise, from the firm determination with which he advanced; others pleased themselves with the hope of seeing in him a supporter of the royalist cause, and a pioneer to prepare the way for the return of the Bourbons. Many delayed forming any judgment upon the matter, but all had need of repose; all longed to be able to sleep in peace, without fear of being arrested in the morning. This generally peaceful disposition of mind was well suited to Bonaparte's plans, and the moderation which he showed in his first acts pleased everybody.

Some who had emigrated, now quietly returned, and their names were erased from the list. My father arrived at Lyons. I had a strong desire to revisit Moulins, and thinking it would be probably a wise step to show myself there, I wrote to M. de la Coste, the Prefect of that department, to ask his leave. He replied very graciously, that though I was not crossed out of the proscribed list, the injustice of putting me in it at all was so fully recognised by every one, that I might come without fear, and should be sure of protection.

The reception which awaited me at Moulins,

was most flattering. All my father's friends and acquaintances flocked to see me. It was a great pleasure to me to perceive how much interest and affection was still felt for him, and it affected me deeply. My return was also of good omen to many families, who had friends on the fatal list; as the first swallow is welcomed which heralds the coming of spring.

CHAPTER XI.

I am weary
Of the bewildering masquerade of life,
Where strangers walk as friends, and friends as strangers ;
Where whispers overheard betray false hearts.

Not knowing friend from foe !

THE SPANISH STUDENT.

I RETURN TO MOULINS—PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE—I REJOIN MY
FATHER AT LYONS—VISIT TO GENEVA—I RETURN TO LE
BATTOUÉ — MR. SUCH-A-ONE — I GO TO PARIS WITH MY
FATHER—OUR HOME AT MOULINS—POVERTY.

It is very unusual for any young person to be made so much of as I was at Moulins. I was very proud of it too, not because I thought I deserved it in any way, but because it was a flattering sign of the esteem which was generally felt for my family ; it was a legacy from my aunt, for they saw in me the adopted

daughter of that heroic victim, and perhaps they hoped that her virtues might be reflected in me ! Nevertheless, I was far from possessing all the good qualities for which they gave me credit, and committed many an imprudence. I will give an instance of one.

I remember one day my aunt's old cook entered my room, dressed in her best, and with an unusual degree of pompous importance in her manner.

"What now, Louise?" I exclaimed, as soon as I saw her. "You are in your holiday dress ; are you going to a wedding?"

"If it is not a wedding," she replied, gravely, "at least it is something relating to marriage that I am come about, and it concerns you!"

I was startled at the singular way in which my chance question fitted to the fact ; and taking advantage of the opening I had given her, she said she was commissioned by a gentleman, whose name she told me, to ask me if there was any chance of my consenting to marry his son ? As in that case, he intended to buy back Les Echerolles ! Much surprised that he had not rather commissioned one of my relations to ask such a question, and fearing that

some trap was concealed under an offer so strangely made, I answered hastily and foolishly enough :

“ I have lost everything except my liberty ; I cannot part with that ! ”

“ But, Mademoiselle,” said Louise, “ think of your father, and his painful position ! These are kind good people, and the son is very well-looking.”

“ I never saw him,” I replied. “ He does not know me either. How can I tell if he would really love me ? ”

More could not be extracted from me, and Louise’s arguments proving all in vain, she departed in worse spirits than she came, and I felt well pleased with my fine answer, and my great wisdom, while in reality I had been only very thoughtless.

M. L——’s proposition was at least deserving of consideration ; and if I had begged a little time to think about it, I might have sought from wiser and more experienced heads than my own the advice I needed to guide me in so important an affair. M. L—— belonged to a respectable family of the middle class, and was truly estimable in every way. It was cer-

tainly my duty to have weighed his proposals a little more, for I do not doubt that the generosity of his character would have prompted him to propose very honourable conditions for the acceptance of my father, whom he had known for many years.

I have often since reproached myself bitterly for my hastiness; every time I saw my father depressed by his sufferings in after years, I have remembered my heedless decision, and said to myself that I might have restored him to his past happiness; but regret came too late.

Oh, how carefully should we reflect upon the least of our actions! everything is of importance in this life; there is nothing so small that it may not produce effects which shall affect us to our dying day, whether it be for good or for evil. Besides higher reasons for regretting my conduct on this occasion, I felt that I must have been thought proud and arrogant, whereas I was only heedless and silly.

When my father returned to Lyons this time, he did not lodge as before at Madame Guichard's because her board would have been too expensive for his means. He went to his tailor's,

who had taken care to let him know the moment it was safe for him to return to Lyons, pressing him at the same time to come to his house.

“You will find with us,” said this kind M. Lemaire, “a small room, which you may occupy as long as ever you please, and a very simple table, to which you are heartily welcome, so pray come as soon as possible.”

My father accordingly established himself in this new abode, where he was most kindly received, and waited on as if he had been her own father by the good and religious Madame Lemaire. Fearing to be an additional burden on these hospitable people, I had no intention of going thither, when I received the following short note from M. Lemaire, who wrote with open-hearted cordiality in his peculiar dialect (he was born at Liege) :

“We eat a turkey at Christmas. Come and share it. Your papa is wearying for you, and we expect you.”

Thus I saw my father once again, and shared as well as himself the hospitable board of the good tailor, at which I have sate many a time since, treated as one of the family, and reve-

rence the virtues which illumined that lowly household, where every one was too humble to guess their own real worth.

Now the extreme change for the worse in my health became apparent. Having been long accustomed to my own sufferings, I was not aware of the progress disease had made. My father, who was unhappy at my aversion to seeing a doctor, imparted his fears to my youngest brother, who was then at Geneva (at that time attached to France), where M. de Guériot commanded the artillery.

My brother soon made his appearance, and said he was come to fetch me to introduce me to some of his friends in Dauphiné, and show me Geneva, where M. de Guériot would receive me gladly. My father approved of this plan, and I entered into it with pleasure.

The journey was delightful. We stopped at Grenoble, and several other small towns, where my brother had friends. I cannot help smiling now when I remember his saying, as we arrived at St. Marcellin :

“Here they measure their food by their friendship, and as they are immeasurably fond

of me, we shall be expected to eat immensely."

Accordingly, I counted five roast meats at supper, though we were only four people ; it was impossible to do full justice to such friendship.

We passed through Chambéry to Geneva, where I was delighted to arrive. M. de Guériot received me with paternal kindness, inquired with much interest into the state of my health, and then said :

"To-morrow, my dear, you must rest. Next day you will see M. Jurine, whom I have already informed that you are come here to consult him."

This was my first intimation of the real reason of my being brought thither. M. Jurine was deservedly very famous, and I could not escape a regular consultation. He thought my state alarming, and from several symptoms declared me to be consumptive. I had to submit to the diet usual in such cases, and take the remedies he prescribed, although they appeared to me very violent ; but I resigned myself to everything.

M. Jurine would have wished to keep me

longer under his own eye, but M. de Guériot having received orders to depart, my brother was obliged to go too ; so that, ill or well, I had to return to Lyons in the next coach, all alone, but very grateful to my brother for this journey, which I owed entirely to his liberality.

I cannot refrain from giving in this place my opinion of those rapid consultations which so many people travel far to seek. The sick person does not always know how to give an accurate medical account of his internal state ; many symptoms are deceptive and puzzling ; and the doctor, who is entirely ignorant of the constitution of the patient thus consulting him for the first time, as well as of his usual manner of life, may easily be led into error, and send the patient away with a totally wrong impression of his case. Thus M. Jurine, clever as he was, and erroneously fancied me consumptive ; by following his advice I still further injured my stomach, in the hope of curing my chest, which had nothing the matter with it.

My father was very unhappy at the result of this consultation, and I was obliged to leave him again, not being able to fulfil the regimen at

M. Lemaire's. I wrote to Mademoiselle l'Espinasse to ask leave to return to her, and the spring found me again at Le Battoué.

I will not describe the pang of parting with my father. My strength daily diminished, and I thought I should never return to the place I was leaving. My friends evidently thought also that they were bidding me a last farewell, and their tenderness moved me much; while the solemnity of all these separations, only added to the melancholy which was partly wearing away my life.

All these journeys did not cost much; but they were uncomfortable and fatiguing. The coaches and cars (which latter were best suited to my finances) were hard and shaky. The latter are only little two-wheeled carts, containing four people, back to back, and driven by a man sitting on the front. I was dreadfully tired when I reached my cousin's house, where I was to begin my course of asses' milk. Madame de Brèze came to spend some time with us, and in spite of the sadness of the times, our friendship gave us many happy hours. An old Abbé Pepin was still living at Le Battoué; but he

went under the name of M. de Raisin, and was introduced to every one as a friend of the house, although he was still a suspicious character ; but the members of government was no longer so anxious to ferret out proscribed people as they had been, although those on the list still feared to show themselves openly.

We were all in the drawing-room, one day, and it was getting dusk, when M. Le Blanc was informed that a stranger wanted to speak to him. He went to the door immediately, and met a man with a humble manner and downcast look, who said, in a low voice, that it was most painful to him to ask assistance of people to whom he was quite a stranger ; but that he was forced to do so by his unhappy position, having recently returned from exile, without any means of support, or even a passport ; he therefore implored a shelter for one night only. M. Le Blanc hardly heard him out before he turned to us to tell us that he was deeply touched by this gentleman's misfortunes, and recommended him to his daughter's special care. Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse's own kind heart always inclined her to help all who were in any distress. This stranger had a peculiar title to her compassion

too, for several of her own uncles and cousins had emigrated and might now be asking assistance of strangers. We all shared the same feeling, and as I recognised in the new-comer, the person with whom I had shared my sovereign, I felt confused by the recollection and pretended not to know him again, and he, to my great satisfaction, did the same, so that I felt grateful to him for sparing my delicacy.

Nevertheless, I told my cousin I thought I had seen him two years before at Madame Grimauld's; but fearing to injure him by any inaccuracy in my report, I gave very few particulars of our short interview. I could not help thinking, nevertheless, that he had then called himself M. Le Brun, and had spoken of two of his sisters as in a convent at Bourges. Now, however, he made no mention of anything of the sort, but merely related to us his recent trials. After undergoing great dangers, he had been obliged to leave France a second time; but weary of wandering in a strange land, he soon returned again. Hardly had his foot touched his native soil, however, when he was arrested, and dragged from prison to prison. He had but just made his escape; and we held

our breath as we listened to the touching recital of all he had undergone. He roused our feelings thoroughly, and when we retired for the night he left us deeply impressed with his misfortunes, and sorry that we could not relieve them in any way.

The blue great coat which had excited Madame Grimauld's suspicions had now given place to a very decent grey cloth one. His appearance was certainly neither prepossessing or very refined, but his misfortunes made him interesting in our eyes. When he was shown into his bed-room, he gave the person who lighted him up a shirt and two pocket-handkerchiefs, begging that they might be washed in the night, as he intended to start the next morning. Nevertheless, he was not down till very late. Long before he was awake, my cousin, who had been told the story of the shirt, and had heard, moreover, that it was a very ragged one, appealed to our good nature to assist her. A piece of linen rapidly measured off and cut out, was soon being transformed by our ready fingers into a set of good shirts; and when our unknown friend entered the room, we were all hard at work; and Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse herself was

busily re-footing a pair of her father's stockings.

He advanced humbly towards her to thank her for her generous hospitality, and would have taken leave of her ; but my cousin said she felt sure he could not be rested enough at present to undertake another journey so soon, and that, besides, she was commissioned by her father to beg that he would remain under their roof a few days longer. He made many apologies for intruding, hesitated whether he ought to accept her kind offer or not ; but at last consented to do so, and we went on sewing with double vigour. He kept at a respectful distance, spoke little, and apparently paid little attention to what we were about.

I have already hinted that he was vulgar-looking ; but we said to ourselves : " People of every rank have been forced to emigrate." Nor were his manners pleasing ; but then we remarked : " Many a man may be a good soldier, though he is not agreeable." In short, we were disposed to be very indulgent, and would not blame him for his want of attractions.

He seemed to try to make up for it by every

possible civility, and our charity prevented us from making any comment on his rather obsequious attentions. Madame de Brèze's little son sometimes rode a donkey by our side when we went out walking, and our unknown friend devoted himself entirely to taking care of him. He held him on the saddle, made him trot, and was so entirely absorbed in teaching the little man how to ride, that he joined very little in the cheerful conversation that enlivened our walking parties in the peaceful woods of Le Battoué.

In-doors, it was rather more difficult to comply with his request that he might be made useful in some way. One day, however, he mentioned that he could wind very well, and Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse immediately brought numerous skeins of cotton and worsted out of her stores, which grew rapidly into little balls beneath his skilful fingers. He told us that a wound in his heel having detained him at one place longer than the rest of his battalion, this slender resource was his only means of earning his daily bread.

"In what country were you then?" one of us inquired.

"In Hungary," he replied, and we were so entirely ignorant about the march of the Prince de Condé's army, that we let the answer pass without remark at the time.

I think he staid more than a month with us, without ever telling his name ; and everybody was too discreet to ask it, to the great surprise of Madame de Brèze's little boy, who said to his mother one day :

"Mamma, has that gentleman no name ? for I have never heard it !"

"My dear," said I, "call him Mr. Such-a-one."

And the appellation stuck by the nameless gentleman for a long time.

"How do you manage, Sir," said good M. Le Blanc to him one day, "not to make a mistake, and fall into unsafe hands sometimes, coming as a total stranger into the country ?"

"Oh, I have an infallible recipe for that," he replied. "I go up to the first peasant I see at work (for they are less suspicious than townspeople), and I tell him that I have lost the name of the gentleman to whom I was recommended in the neighbourhood, that he was an excellent man, well known by his liberality and

goodness, and had been persecuted in the Reign of Terror. In this way," he added, "I was directed to come here, for every one in the neighbourhood of Le Battoué exclaimed at once: 'Oh, that must be M. Le Blanc!'"

We were all pleased with this praise so skilfully administered to my excellent cousins, who certainly fully deserved it.

After a time, the stranger announced his departure in form. The shirts were made, the stockings footed, there was no longer any reason for detaining him, so we let him go. Our parcel of three shirts and three pair of stockings was deposited in his room; and Madame de Brèze, who was the only one amongst us who had any money to dispose of, hid a little in the centre of the parcel, wrapped up in a night-cap, as a sort of compensation for her son's riding-lessons, which she felt too delicate to give in person.

Our friend, who knew nothing of all this, bade farewell to us with many expressions of humility and gratitude; and next morning, at break of day, Mr. Such-a-one and his parcel were out of sight.

These minute details about so insignificant a

person may appear tedious, but they add a few graphic lines to the picture of the manners of that day ; and whatever opinion they may give of the individual, whom I met again afterwards, the reader must remember I had not my present experience at the time of which I have been speaking.

Public misfortune and private persecution had now thoroughly isolated each family. Shut up within themselves, all lived almost entirely out of the world, only anxious to be unseen and forgotten by it. A number of those on the proscribed list, who were afraid to stay long in one place, came to the houses of those of their own party by turns to ask for a temporary shelter, secure of silence and safety there. Delicacy often forbade people from asking the name of those they had received under their roof. They were suffered to depart unquestioned and unsuspected ; and perhaps the very same night their room was occupied by some other fugitive, who would depart as speedily. Many swindlers visited in this way the homes of virtue and innocence, for those who owned them were unskilled in deceit, and did not suspect in others the guile they eschewed themselves, while they

preferred exercising indiscriminate hospitality to running the chance of rejecting one real sufferer. This was the brightest feature of those sad times.

I had begun my course of asses' milk, when I was interrupted by a violent attack of hoop-cough. This malady was then quite an epidemic amongst grown-up people, and many died of it; but I had naturally a strong constitution, and struggled through it well enough to insist on accompanying my father to Paris, when he came to Le Battoué in the autumn on his way to solicit his final erasure from the proscribed list, which he obtained leave to do in person. To be with him was now my only wish in this world; he was my only treasure. It was not merely disease which was wearing out my strength; it was the misery of an unsettled life.

Without a home, and moving constantly from place to place, I dared not attach myself to anything; and I walked sadly through other people's gardens and grounds, regretting bitterly that I could not have even a rose-tree of my own; for who would water it when I went away?

It would pine and die, as I thought I was myself doing.

My father's return revived me, for he let me come with him ; so I suppose my appearance did not alarm him. This time, my earnest desire to accompany him made me conceal my suffering state as much as possible. We returned as I had come, in a jolting car without springs. Trotting along, and well shaken over the stones (we were not able to be fastidious in those days), I arrived in Paris, hooping-cough and all, as if there was nothing the matter ; and the first person I espied was a physician, who had taken what he thought his last farewell of me the year before. He was not a little astonished to see me, having felt sure I must be dead ; and my having reversed his sentence seemed a good omen.

My youngest brother Chambolle came to Paris the same day that we did, to seek his promotion, and hoping to have his name struck out of the fatal list. We were erased from it the same day, and went together to promise not to disturb the peace of the Republic, a promise which I gave very sincerely, not a little

amused at being thought so formidable. My father had many difficulties in getting his name struck off the list, and much trouble and time was spent in vain, which gave me the double annoyance of seeing my father's hopes dwindling away ; and being obliged to part from him again, as we could not afford that I should remain in Paris any longer.

About this time there arose a question of a naval expedition against America, which offered many advantages to those who volunteered to serve in it ; so that my brother hastened to put down his name for it, feeling sure that it would forward his promotion. When I heard what he had done, I felt very miserable. I dreaded such a distant expedition for him ; and I felt that it was full of dangers. Might he not be once more taken prisoner, or fall a victim to the yellow fever, which was then raging ? Loving my brother as tenderly as I did, and seeing all the perils to which he was about to be exposed, this fresh separation wrung my heart, and I felt as if we should never meet again. Could he on his part make up his mind to go without a severe heart-ache ? He thought it would help him on in the world it is true ; but my father's advanced age,

and the desolate state in which I might be left, weighed heavily on his mind.

"If my father should die," he said to me, one night, "and you should be left alone, what what would you do if I were out of reach?"

"I have thought much about it," I replied, "my dear brother; for, alas! I must think of everything; and in such a case I have made up my mind to become a Sister of Charity. I am fond of nursing the sick, and should then be serving God also."

"Are you in earnest?" he exclaimed, in a tone of alarm. "Is that your real intention?"

"Yes," said I, gravely, "it is. Do not suppose it is a mere passing fancy. I have long thought of it. My weak state of health would be an objection to the plan now, but I hope it may please God that I shall get better."

My good father was fast asleep while we two had this conversation by the fireside, where the oppressed heart often seeks relief, by imparting its inmost thoughts to one who will sympathise with it. Chambolle looked very grave and left me, for it was getting late. At daybreak I was roused by finding him standing at my bedside.

“Alexandrine,” he said, “is it your real intention to become a Sister of Charity, in case—”

“Yes! and gladly too.”

“I have not been able to close my eyes this night,” returned Chambolle. “Your project haunts me. I know my going grieves you. Promise me then that you will give up your plan, and I will abandon mine. Say farewell to the Sisters of Charity, and I will say farewell to America! I have still time to withdraw my name, and will hasten to do so at once, if you will give me your promise!”

I gave it instantly, and the matter was settled.

As I have said, my father's affairs made very slow progress. No one heeds the solicitations of a poor man, because he is not feared, and there is nothing to be gained from him; so no one scruples to rob him of what little remains, by amusing him with idle promises which waste his time and empty his purse. Doors fly open before the rich man, which are barred against the poor. That, at least, is what our experience taught us.

It was settled that I should go to Auxerre,

to M. de Guériot's, with my brother, whilst my father, who would not leave Paris till he was erased from the proscribed list, staid with one of his acquaintances, who had just offered him a room till his business should be concluded. This offer, so kindly made, brought tears to our eyes ; touched to the heart by this unexpected succour, we prayed fervently together, and soon after I parted from my father.

Chambolle set out before me, because he was going part of the way on foot, as we could not afford to pay for more than one place in the coach. Mine was in the front division, and very much exposed to the inclemency of the weather ; for a leather curtain, flapping up and down at the side, sheltered us very imperfectly. I got into the coach with a bad fit of hooping-cough upon me, and was not very warmly clad, so that, altogether, I was very ill by the time we arrived at Auxerre.

The tender cares of Madame de Guériot and her husband soon set me up again. That time was one of the happiest of my life, and I cannot say how grateful I felt for all their kindness to me. I spent a charming winter there, close to

my brother, and rejoicing in feeling better than I had done for long, my pleasure in which was augmented by the hopes my father gave me of procuring the erasure of his name at last, which was really accomplished the ensuing spring. Very soon after he obtained a pension of eighteen hundred francs. It was not nearly that which was due to his rank as field-marshal, but they pretended he had not held it long enough to claim more than half the pension attached to it.

In spite of the repugnance my father felt at returning to Moulins, he decided to do so, for the chance of being able to buy back some of his own property. There were many instances of the new possessors, feeling their consciences touched by the sufferings of those whose goods had been confiscated, offering them their lands back on terms low enough to suit impoverished purses. Some, more generous, content with the profits they had drawn already from estates they got for nothing, gave them up freely to their real owners; while others again purposely put difficulties in the way of the bargain, and yet boasted of their willingness to come to terms!

My brother and I went down to Moulins together, and my father joined us there in a little lodging suitable to his small fortune. We filled it with our own old furniture, which the care of M. de Tarade had kept for us, and which he freely gave back to my father. My brother returned to his benefactor, M. de Guériot. My good old nurse, Madame Duvernais, came back to us, having been with her own friends all this time. The moment she thought she could be useful, she returned to us. Assisted by a woman, who made all the necessary purchases, she took the sole charge of our little household, and conducted it with all the economy which our slender means required.

Very soon, my eldest brother came to us from Germany, and for the first time for many years we had a home of our own. One only, of those who had got possession of our lands (Andril-land, a potter), restored to us a small estate at a reasonable price, though even that was large for us to pay. Another boasted everywhere that he was ready to give up the house and domain of Les Echerolles; but he did not tell the hard conditions he required, thus getting credit for

much generosity at our expense, and keeping safe possession of the place.

Many of those who had returned from emigration, more fortunate than we were, got a large portion of their property back again; and, by great exertions and rigid economy, contrived to pay off their debts, and spend the rest of their lives peaceably by their own firesides.

All our efforts, however, were in vain to obtain even a competency. The little money we had, was not enough to pay for the small portion of land my father had redeemed; a good man indeed lent us the necessary sum, but still that was a debt which we must repay. My father's little pension would not maintain us all, and many bitter thoughts mingled with the joy of our happy meeting. I reproached myself for depriving him of a share of the comforts he could have afforded himself had he been alone, and brooded day and night over some means of gaining money, till at last I determined to seek a situation. Perhaps, thought I, I may thus be able to add something to his little fortune.

No sooner had this idea taken possession of

my mind, than it absorbed me entirely ; and my eldest brother, though of too undecided a character to take any very active steps himself, gave me good advice, and strengthened me in my resolution. My father, who was uneasy about my future life, saw the necessity of my doing something, though he dreaded parting from me, and still more seeing me dependent on other people's caprices.

I was offered the place of second mistress in a girls' school in Moulins, but he positively refused to let me go. A little time after, a lady of my acquaintance wished to recommend me to some relations of hers, who were looking out for a nursery governess for their children, and lived in Paris. She did not give my name, as they would not have wished to take a real lady, but they promised I should have nothing to do with the servants. However, though I was ready for anything, my poor father could not make up his mind to it. That was a very sad day, when we hardly dared to look at each other for fear of reading our sentence in each other's eyes.

My poor father ! was your daughter, then,

to be a nursery governess? But it was for your own sake. Nevertheless, he looked so unhappy that I refused it at last, to his great joy; and then I felt, by my own intense relief, how much it would have cost me.

How many things there are going on in the world that the rich and happy little wot of! They neither understand nor feel those battles between hard necessity and strong feelings; those bitter struggles which must be hid as if they were a crime; those refinements of feeling which are reckoned inexcusable in the poor. Oh! who can define those varying hues of sorrow, to which each passing day, each careless word adds a shade, till you have gone through every gradation, from the lightest tinge to the deepest darkness? What pen can describe such things? The happy are soon weary of the sorrows of others, and if they think themselves forced to say some kind words, they are often heedlessly or scornfully spoken, and fall like a scorching flame upon the wounded heart.

CHAPTER XII.

The star of the unconquered will,
He rises in my breast;
Serene, and resolute, and still,
And calm and self-possessed.

And thou too, whosoe'er thou art,
That readest this brief psalm,
As one by one thy hopes depart,
Be resolute and calm.

O fear not, in a world like this,
And thou shalt know ere long—
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer, and be strong!

LONGFELLOW.

MY FATHER OBTAINS A SITUATION—AN UNEXPECTED EVENT—I
COME TO LYONS, AND MAKE ACQUAINTANCE WITH MY STEP-
MOTHER—I OBTAIN THE PROSPECT OF A SITUATION IN
RUSSIA—MY OLD NURSE.

WHEN my father had lost all hope of re-
covering some remains of his fortune for us,

his heart sank, and living at Moulins made him utterly miserable. We soon saw we must remove from thence, and seek to distract him from his melancholy thoughts by change of scene. We went into the country, to some relations of ours, where my father, in a cheerful family party, and surrounded with unfamiliar objects, which brought back no painful recollections, soon regained his spirits and his natural vivacity, which made him singularly agreeable—that is, as he possessed it in a degree uncommon at any age. As for me, I had put away all thought of leaving him ; my presence gave him pleasure, and happy to be able to take care of him, I imagined that my future life would flow calmly on in this pleasant occupation, when a letter from my eldest brother Martial, who had not accompanied us, gave another turn to our fortunes, and caused us to remove once more.

M. le Marquis de Chabannes had just got a patent for the new light stage-coaches (*velocifères*), which everybody now knows about. As he was travelling for the purpose of establishing them along the road from Paris to Lyons, he had just passed through Moulins, and happening

to meet Martial there, he charged him to offer my father the post of director at Lyons, with a salary of twelve hundred francs.

Many of the impoverished nobility obtained places from the generosity of the Marquis de Chabannes, who thus assisted his brothers-in-arms and companions in misfortune. I do not know, however, if this kindness did as much service to his affairs as it did honour to his heart, for I always suspected that my good father at least would make but a very bad director of such a concern.

My brother, who was appointed one of the inspectors on the line, and had already gone off to Lyons, wrote to urge my father to join him there immediately, and begin business at once.

As soon as my father saw an opening for exertion present itself before him, he threw himself into it with all the impetuosity of youth, and instantly entering into the hopes held out to him, he set out on foot the moment he received my brother's letter, to go to a little town in the neighbourhood to meet the Lyons coach. In a few hours I saw myself separated from

him, and all my dreams of future tranquillity destroyed ; but I was deeply touched, for it was for my sake, and that I might rest, that my father was going to work hard at his age. His departure made me very unhappy, I could not bear to think of him beginning life anew as a hard working director. He had promised to summon me to him as soon as he was settled. Many months slipped away, whilst I anxiously awaited his orders, and at last he wrote me word of the most unexpected event that could possibly have happened to me. He was going to be married ! He announced it to me in so lively and witty a manner, that I am very sorry not to be able to transcribe his own words, but I have mislaid the letter.

“ I have been proposed to,” he said. “ I have no great wish to marry again ; but as I have been taken a liking for, I shall sell myself for eighteen thousand francs. If they will settle the money on you, it is a done thing.”

I wrote instantly to implore him not to risk his happiness for my sake, as I should be inconsolable ; but the letter came too late. He wrote again to tell me of his marriage, and did

not conceal from me that it had been hurried on by his wife.

This peculiarity increased my uneasiness, as I could not guess what extraordinary reason had induced Mademoiselle de Cirlot to take such a step. In after years, I saw reason to think it a happy union, and that we ought to feel very grateful for the result of an event, which at first appeared strange enough to make me seriously uneasy about the happiness of my affectionate father.

As it is to you, Maria, that I dedicate this book, you will doubtless be interested to hear the singular particulars I can give of your grandfather's second nuptials ; and other people must forgive my entering into such minute accounts of our family history, as I have really but little else to relate.

My father had been shut up in his room for some days with a very bad cold, when he was visited by a gentleman, whom he had often met in the world. This gentleman (apparently a good deal surprised at the commission he had received) informed him, after a long preamble, that he was come to ask his hand in marriage,

or rather to offer him the hand of a lady, who had taken a strong liking to him.

These words plunged my father into an indescribable state of astonishment.

“Does she know that I have lost everything?” he exclaimed.

“Yes.”

“That I have three children?”

“Yes.”

“That I have only a small pension, and am seventy-four years old?”

“She knows all that, and is coming to explain it for herself;” and as he spoke, Mademoiselle de Cirlot entered the room.

Like a sensible woman, she entered fully and at once into matters of business, expressed her wishes, and gave every particular concerning her fortune. My father, still perfectly bewildered with the singularity of the proposal, hesitated and tried to gain time, by stating the necessity of consulting his children; but she was not inclined to give him much time for weighing the matter, and so my father, flattered doubtless, by the interest he had inspired, agreed to everything. As soon as Mademoiselle de Cirlot received his

positive consent, she took charge of all the necessary preliminaries, and the marriage contract was drawn up, for she feared if her relations knew the clause about her money (by which my brother profited afterwards, if I did not), they would endeavour to break off the marriage; she eluded putting the conditions in writing, however; and my father, thinking it doubtless more generous towards one who showed him such disinterested attachment, to give his hand, than to *sell* it, did not remind her of it.

No one who reads this can fail to feel convinced, as I was, that either there was something wrong about this lady, or that her mind was affected; but there was nothing of the sort, and in after years I understood her whole history.

Mademoiselle de Cirlot was fifty years old, when she took it into her head to marry my father, whom she had often met at her sister's, Madame du Foissac. She had grown old in her sister's house, whose husband contradicted her constantly, and wearied her by bad jokes, often repeated. Mademoiselle de Cirlot was

wanting in that ready wit which might have repelled or retorted them ; and while treated by her relatives as a child, she perceived that they both speculated on her fortune, and showed up her little absurdities for the amusement of their friends. The feeblest creature has occasional moments of energy. Wearied of her dependent state, she escaped from it at the moment it was least expected of her. My father's amiable character, and the respect in which he was held by every one, induced her to seek in him the protector she needed. To succeed in this affair, on which she had fixed all her hopes of happiness, it was necessary to be both prompt and secret in her measures, which explains all that appears mysterious in her conduct.

I was, however, ignorant of all these circumstances at the time, and being prejudiced against Mademoiselle de Cirlot, my first astonishment at finding I had a step-mother was mingled with a good deal of irritation. I left Burgundy, however, where I had been ever since my father left me ; to rejoin him, and make

acquaintance with his wife; and I went to Lyons by the canal-boat.

Every one knows what a fuss the arrival of a canal-boat always makes: what an agitation succeeds to the order and quiet that reigned there but a moment before. I waited quietly in my corner till the crowd of travellers, porters, and parcels had moved away, and was just coming out after them, when I espied a kindly face—it was my father's. To fly into his arms, as in old times, was but the work of a moment. After we had talked a few minutes, he said: "My wife is waiting for you." His wife! We went on a little way, still talking; then he stopped, and said: "There she is." I found myself in front of a little fat woman, with a large, flat, and rather red face, and the smallest of noses. She wore a black and orange hat, from which depended a sort of Spanish net, ended by a tassel of the same colours, which fell upon her shoulder. I was perfectly aghast, but afterwards I found that her taste for bright colours did not prevent her being an excellent person.

Our affairs being wound up at Moulins, which we left for good and all, I found myself settled once more in my father's house ; but my existence there seemed altogether different to me now : no longer of use to him, I felt in the way. My step-mother's fortune, though not large, when joined to my father's pension, amply sufficed for their wants ; but my presence in their small establishment diminished their comforts, and I therefore determined to return to my former plan. The care Madame des Echerolles took of her husband made me quite comfortable as to his welfare, and I could therefore safely depart ; in doing which, I felt I should fulfil the most earnest wish of my step-mother, who dreaded every rival in her husband's affection.

My father, too, was again uneasy about my future life.

"If I die," he said to me one day, "you will be in distress—this thought will embitter my latter days." Taking advantage of this opening, I begged him to allow me to look for a situation, even should it be out of France.

"The sacrifice once made," I said, "the

comfort of feeling I am not in want, will console you for our parting ; and the end of your life will not be disturbed by the fear lest I should lack bread."

I shall never forget the answer he made me as soon as he could speak.

"I will consent to your wishes, my daughter," he said. "If you are happy, I shall bear your being away from me the more easily. A father must sacrifice his own pleasure for his children's good ; and even if I should never see you again, I would still say as I do now. Go and prosper !" and my good old father wept.

By my eldest brother's advice, I wrote to Madame de Malet, the wife of one of his brother officers, whom he had met in Paris. M. de Malet had made acquaintance with Mademoiselle de Bélonde during their emigration, and married her before he returned to France. An irresistible feeling almost always impels a Frenchman to return to his country—a feeling as strong though less pleasant compelled me to fly from it. I described my situation accurately in my letter to this lady, although I had never seen her ; I told her all the reasons which

compelled me to seek a situation, and without concealing my ignorance, I dwelt upon the zeal with which I should endeavour to fulfil my duties. My letter was written with deep feeling, and seemed to touch her heart, for I soon received a kind and sympathising answer. Madame de Malet verified my brother's praises of her by writing with a considerate kindness that charmed me. She inquired if I should be afraid to go to Russia. I told her I would go further still if necessary, for I was afraid of nothing but being forced to live upon other people, and be a burden to my father.

One of Madame de Malet's sisters was lady in waiting to her royal highness the Dowager Duchess of Wurtemberg, who was then at St. Petersburg, and she hoped by her means to find me a situation as governess. About this time M. de Lemery, who had emigrated from France, and gone to live at St. Petersburg, took a journey to Paris. The new friend Providence had raised up to me in Madame de Malet interested him in my case.

M. de Lemery, an old soldier, was at the head of a large foundry near St. Petersburg.

The empress dowager, who appreciated his talents, bestowed on him her patronage; and he deserved general esteem by the good use which he made of it, and the assistance he afforded to all his companions in misfortune.

As soon as he heard my history, he seemed to take a paternal interest in me. He made every arrangement with Madame de Malet for my journey, and undertook all my travelling expenses from Lubeck to St. Petersburg. Besides all this, he insisted on my staying six months with one of his friends, before I accepted any situation, "Because," he said, "too much haste would cost Mademoiselle des Echerolles some of the advantages she might derive from the sacrifice she has made. When she has found a lucrative situation, we can make some arrangement for refunding what I have advanced." This generosity removed all my difficulties, and I resolved to depart; the fact that I had an uncle at St. Petersburg being an additional reason for going thither. Not that my uncle was rich enough to maintain me, but that his name being well known there would be a support to me, and distinguish me a little from the crowd

of adventurers who flocked into Russia from all parts.

Such a departure as that which I was preparing for is like death, except inasmuch as one still retains feelings and affections. I seemed to look at every object as if for the last time. My friends appeared more affectionate than ever. Everything acquired beauty to my eyes from the prospect of losing sight of it so soon. It was a very sorrowful time. I dared not even look at my poor father ; and I felt the necessity of shortening a period of suspense which became every day more painful. Some business which I had at Moulins gave me an excuse to go thither, and claim some money without which I could not set out. I asked my father's permission to go in person, saying I should return before my final departure ; and in deceiving him, I really deceived myself too at the moment.

"I shall return," I said as I got into the coach. I can still see my dear father standing silently by the door, his eyes fixed on my face, and with difficulty restraining his tears. My words still echoed in his ears, but we both felt

that we could not bear to utter an eternal farewell, and that we must not meet again ; we understood each other.

The little that remained of our old possessions being sold and divided amongst us, I had a small sum of money for my portion, hardly sufficient to take me to Lubeck. I was to go to Paris in the spring. Till then I remained at Moulins, and in the Nivernais, where I wished to take leave of all those friends from whom I had received so many proofs of affection. The rumour of my departure for Russia was already widely circulated ; it was thought a strange plan, and I was blamed for it everywhere. “ What a desperate resolution ! ” they said. “ Why does she not stay with her friends, who love her, and like to have her, instead of going into exile as it were, into a country full of dangers, and treachery, and deceitful promises ! ”

The prefect, M. le Marquis Delacoste, who had lived there, sent me word to reflect well before I set off to that distant country, where I should probably find myself disappointed in many things—short, I was found fault with by every one. Still they suggested no other hope

in the place of the one they would have taken from me; they offered me nothing instead. There are many such half friends in the world, who find fault with all you are doing without helping you to any better scheme. I was weary of these Job's comforters; and I should have left Moulins at once had I not been able to be useful there to a friend as unfortunate as myself, Mademoiselle Guichard, for whom I procured a situation as governess in Moulins.

I should not speak of this circumstance if I did not wish to remark here that the poorest and weakest person may *sometimes* have the happiness of being useful, though it is rarely enough they can enjoy it.

I must here mention one thing which made me feel deep regret, almost amounting to remorse. Madame Duvernais, my excellent and faithful friend, my good old nurse, had followed us to Lyons; but my step-mother would not receive her into her house. Whether it was that she dreaded the extra expense, or that my father's insisting upon my nurse's being treated as a friend of the family had displeased her, she was inexorable; and the two women took the greatest

aversion to each other. My poor nurse was obliged to accept Madame Guichard's generous offer of a home. Her work more than paid for the little additional expense she occasioned, and she supported her sinking spirits by the hope that, sooner or later, we should come together once again, so that my proposed departure for Russia was a tremendous blow to her.

I must confess I did not dare to tell her of it myself—such a parting was beyond my strength. My poor old friend saw me go without any alarm, as she had no suspicion of the length of my intended absence. I placed in safe keeping, at Lyons for her, a sum of money which was my own, and which my father allowed me to dispose of freely ; but I could never equal that excellent woman in generosity, for she would not touch it, and maintained herself, as long as she lived, by her own labour. She could not, for a long time, forgive me for having doubted her strength and firmness, and going away without confiding my plans to her. It was not till after repeated entreaties and assurances of my grief at having offended her,

that she would grant me that full forgiveness which was necessary to my peace of mind.

Madame Guichard's affairs, after a time, obliging her to sell her house, my nurse took refuge at M. Fellot's, an old friend of my father's, where she was treated with all the kindness and consideration she so richly deserved till the day of her death. Having no means of repaying that generous man all I owe him, I am happy to express, in these pages, my fervent gratitude for all he has done for us, and most especially for fulfilling what should have been *my* duty towards Madame Duvernais.

I think I need make no excuses for saying so much about her, for all that is really great and noble deserves the admiration of the world, and it is always praiseworthy to publish the virtues of those generous souls who are too lowly for their deeds to be known to fame, whose trumpet proclaims through the world the merit of glaring and noisy acts, while men, ever listening to it admiringly, learn from it only dazzling facts, great crimes, or celebrated feats of arms; for quiet and modest merit generally escapes its notice altogether.

Let me then be permitted to raise my feeble voice to record the generosity, the fidelity, and the disinterestedness by which a poor and simple-minded woman practically revealed the greatness of her soul.

CHAPTER XIII.

In this false world we do not always know
 Who are our friends—who our enemies.
 We all have enemies, and all need friends !

LONGFELLOW.

THE RUSSIAN PROJECT DEFEATED—HISTORY OF MADEMOISELLE
 D'A——I ENTER UPON A NEW SITUATION—MY NEW MODE OF
 LIFE—THE LAWSUIT GAINED—KINDNESS OF M. F——.

AFTER having taken leave of my excellent friends in the Nivernais, I returned to Paris. Hardly had I reached it, when I heard that war was declared, and hostilities had commenced, so that it was *impossible* to set off for Russia. What was to become of me ?

Madame de Brèze, who had accompanied me to Paris, pressed me to return with her, and await at her house a more favourable opening

for my plans. I refused to go with that dear friend, however ; and Heaven only knows what it cost me ! I could hardly bear to take leave of her when she was compelled to return home, and I remained alone at Paris.

In severing myself from her, I broke the last link of that chain which connected me with my country, with my old way of life, and all the memories of the past. Henceforth, I must begin, as it were, a new life. I had no longer any one to whom I could say : " You remember this or that," or " We did it together !" To whom should I speak of any mutual friend when all were strange ? Those who have never left their own country cannot guess the countless daily sacrifices that must be made in such a case. Every moment of one's life, at first, brings a new pang with it, probably utterly unappreciated too, by those who surround you. A word, it may be, or a look rouses memories they little reckon of ; and nothing can make amends for those small internal pangs which one cannot complain of, while a great sacrifice brings a sort of compensation with it.

I had now taken leave of friends and coun-

try with a resolution never to see them again, unless I could gain an independence.

“If I fail in this,” I said to one of my cousins, “our parting shall be eternal. I will die without complaining; no one shall know what I suffer. To wish for my return, therefore, is to wish at the same time for the success of my enterprise.”

When my cousin was gone, I hired a small garret, very scantily furnished, in the hotel we had inhabited together, took in needlework to support myself, and waited patiently. I did not lose sight, however, of my old acquaintances, or my new friend. Madame de Malet had received me most kindly, and I became fonder of her every day. I divided my time between her and Madame Royer Collard, one of the friends I formerly used to visit at the nunnery at Moulins. Her sister Désirée had rejoined her at Paris—Désirée, whom I had seen depart from Lyons in the midst of our misfortunes.

Both had experienced great vicissitudes, Victorine, without leaving her native town of Chambery; Désirée, in traversing Germany on

foot, labouring, with her little sister Agathe's help, to support their aged father and his two children by a second marriage. Still almost children themselves, but called to make great exertions for the sake of duty, their spirit rose to their task.

These times were rich in interesting episodes, which added the charm of truth to the strangeness of fiction.

Our long parting had not cooled our early friendship—we found it as strong as ever. We told each other the history of our vicissitudes, and I received from them comfort, affection, and advice, to brighten my desolate existence.

All the necessaries of life were dear at Paris. My purse got very low—my gains were small, and I found I must economise still more. I soon saw that I must go into the country to await my departure for Russia. Autumn was approaching—too expensive a season for me in the city—so not daring to break into the little hoard on which all my hopes depended, I asked Madame de Soulligné's leave to stay with her till the spring, a permission which was

promptly granted to me. I got my things ready to go, and was hastily finishing a piece of embroidery which must be taken home, when M. de Royer Collard, my friend's husband, entered my little cell. I felt sure, as soon as I saw him, something unusual must be going to happen, for he had not time to come up four pair of stairs for nothing.

"I am come to propose to you a way of remaining in Paris," he said. "It has its hardships, I must allow, but time will accustom you to them. You will stay in the midst of your business, and near all of us, who are sincerely attached to you, and, in spite of difficulties, we shall be able to see you now and then."

"Tell me, what is it?"

It turned out to be a proposal to place myself at the head of an insane lady's establishment.

"You will be mistress there," continued my friend, "you will have nice apartments, twelve hundred francs, and no expenses. That is the bright side of the question. I cannot, however, conceal from you that you will be shut up with Mademoiselle d'A—— till the end of a law-

suit, which is begun, against M. F——, the trustee of her fortune, by an old aunt of hers, who declares she is not out of her mind. Both the contending parties are bound not to enter Mademoiselle d'A——'s doors before the affair is settled, as she is to be kept in ignorance of the whole matter; and to avoid all intrigue, no company whatever is to be admitted into the house."

My position compelled me not to refuse anything merely because it was disagreeable.

"I have no right to refuse," I said to M. Royer. "The hand of Providence seems to point this out to me, and I will accept it."

I fixed a day to meet M. F—— at Madame Royer's, that I might make acquaintance with the person on whom I should in future be so dependent. And I felt I was also to be looked at, which was by no means agreeable to me. The reception I met with from M. F——, however, soon put me at my ease. He was a well-mannered man, and his way of speaking soon showed me that he thoroughly understood my position, and gave him a claim on my gratitude. He avoided all that could make me

feel humiliated in accepting a subordinate situation, and spoke of it in quite a different light.

“You have taken a noble resolution,” he said, “and I will do all that in me lies to make your existence more bearable. My cousin being much better at this moment, I am very desirous to procure her the society of a lady, who, by the influence of her mind and manner, may bring her back imperceptibly to the ways of the world.”

M. Royer was kind enough to enter into every arrangement for me, for M. F—— never spoke to me of money, and took every care to spare me all the most painful part of the steps I had taken. Whilst I awaited the day fixed on for my going into service (to call things at once by their right names), I inquired into the history of my mad lady, and this is the outline of it.

Mademoiselle d'A—— was both clever and well educated, but had always shown a little eccentricity, which was increased by her attention to abstruse studies. Her father, who was in the household of the Comte d'Artois, perished on the guillotine, as did also her mother. Her

brother died in the island of Martinique, and she remained alone. So many misfortunes deranged her intellect. Her fortune excited the cupidity of many intriguers. One adventurer, who gained her affections, received enormous sums of money from her. Devoted to the cause of the Bourbons, and grieved to her heart's core by the impiety which reigned in France, love, religion, and politics combined to turn her head. For a long time her oddities increased, without giving her family a positive excuse for treating her as insane. At last she gave a clear proof of her madness, by a letter which she addressed to Napoleon, and carried herself to the Tuileries.

“I had even avoided using pins when I was dressing,” she said to me, one day, when speaking of what she believed to be the cause of her seclusion, “that I might not be suspected of any intention of taking the life of the Emperor!”

After having quoted in her letter the decrees of several councils, she went on to inform Napoleon that he was too great a man to wish to usurp a throne, and begged for an audience to

consult with him upon the means of restoring it to its legitimate owner. Then the insane part began. The Dauphin, who died in the Temple, would appear on such a day, at mass, in such a church, &c.

Napoleon sent the letter to Fouché, and very soon Mademoiselle d'A—— was taken before him, and her insanity certified. When she was brought home again, her family named M. F—— as trustee and administrator of her fortune; and he was empowered to see that every possible means was used to endeavour to restore her to her senses. This decision very much disconcerted a great many people, who, taking advantage of the insanity of Mademoiselle d'A—— for their own benefit, had striven to conceal it from her family. Of course they were dismissed from any connexion with her concerns; but, irritated at losing all their influence, and yet having no rights to claim, they brought forward a good old aunt of Mademoiselle d'A——'s, who was more credulous than wise, that they might, in her name, begin a lawsuit against the administrator of her niece's

fortune ; accusing him of magnifying her insanity, that he might get hold of her property.

M. F—— desired that while the lawsuit lasted, his cousin might be entirely under the doctor's orders ; he agreed not to see her, that he might not be suspected of trying to influence her in any way, and demanded the same promise from the opposite party, which the judges agreed was but fair.

All visitors were therefore forbidden the house, and this was the reason why I was to be shut up. When the day came that had been fixed for my entering upon my new duties, my eldest brother, who was then in Paris, escorted me to M. F——'s house. We then all three got into a coach, the fourth place in which was occupied by a M. Pussin, whose business it was daily to preside at Mademoiselle A——'s dinner. He was to introduce me to her.

We crossed the Champs Elysées, and the carriage stopped before a pretty though small house at the entrance of the Rue de Chaillot. This, then, was to be my prison ! We entered

quietly, and M. Pussin went at once to Mademoiselle d'A——, but in spite of all our precautions she had heard an unusual noise, and when she passed the door of the room in which she thought she had heard people stirring, she peeped through the key-hole, and I immediately heard a harsh, sharp voice saying :

“ Treachery ! treachery ! I see a lady ! I see M. F—— ! They are here ! ”

I was a good deal disturbed at this exclamation, which seemed to betoken me a reception full of mistrust. In a few minutes I received a message from her, begging I would come down. No presentation at court, I am sure, could have made my heart beat more rapidly ; nevertheless, I summoned up all my courage, and went in boldly. She was at dinner, and received me very politely, begging me to sit down by her, and tell her what had brought me to Paris. I replied, that the misfortunes which had desolated France having ruined my family, I had come thither on business, and that my friends had procured me rooms in the house she occupied. M. Pussin

remarked that in the solitude in which she lived, he thought she might be glad of another person in the house.

Mademoiselle d'A——, apparently thinking it would be a great gain to her to have a new acquaintance, immediately sent for a plate and knife and fork for me, and invited me to dine with her every day whilst I remained in Paris. Then looking at me with her single eye, for she had but one, and that very bright and piercing, she exclaimed :

“I recognise your face ! You are the daughter of the Comte d'Artois, who died in the year 1783. I saw your funeral. It is wonderful your eyes and teeth should be in such good preservation.”

It was in vain that I laughingly assured her that I never remembered having died.

“That is possible,” she replied, “but nevertheless I recognise you perfectly.”

As soon as dinner was finished, she returned to her room, and I hastened to mine, hoping to find my brother and M. F—— still there. They were gone. My blood ran cold. The final step had been taken. I was alone—alone !

and in the midst of Paris, but yet separated from every one. Alone!—My eyes filled with tears, but I dared not give way.

Sitting in silence and solitude, however, my sorrowful thoughts would probably have got the better of me at last, if Madame d'A——'s butler had not come in just then to introduce all the servants to me, who were henceforth to consider themselves under my orders. They were all marshalled before me in a row, making a ceremonious obeisance as they passed. There was her lady's maid, her nurse, her cook, the porter's wife, and lastly the porter himself, hat in hand. I mention them all because it was said afterwards that she was allowed no servants.

The house stood between a garden and a court, and would have seemed a delightful abode to me, but for the situation of its mistress.

In an hour or two, I received a note from M. F——, apologising for having gone without seeing me, but saying he was afraid of being detected by his cousin, and so possibly prejudicing her against me. He wished me joy of my successful interview with her, and sent me

a few new books to beguile, if possible, the first beginning of a life that must appear so strange to me. The taste which he had showed in selecting them added to the merit of this little attention, and a feeling of gratitude for the kindness I had met with, sweetened the close of a painful day.

I soon got pretty well used to my way of life. If I might not receive company, I was at least free to go out occasionally, and the real interest I soon felt in *Mademoiselle d'A*—— made my chains press less heavily. She had a great deal of cleverness, was well read, and had a good memory. She knew our classics almost by heart, and often talked with a degree of good sense which astonished me, and made me forget her real state, till some strange wild speech recalled me suddenly from my delusion.

Sometimes she recounted to me the history of her family with the greatest accuracy ; spoke affectionately of her parents, and reasoned very sensibly on many subjects. When *Mademoiselle d'A*—— had the brightest gleams of reason, she was most to be pitied ; for then she felt her dependent situation and longed for

liberty ; while the crafty means to which she resorted to procure it, rendered the strictest watchfulness necessary. She soon perceived I had more authority over the household than herself. “ Your eyes have an incomprehensible power here,” she would say to me ; “ I ought to be mistress in my own house, but I feel you are so in reality ;” and then she would fall into such a state of despondency as to draw many tears from me.

At first she liked me ; but the authority which I possessed soon gave her a distrust of me, which was purposely increased by those beneath her, who disliked my superintendence. I will not here enter upon the wearying details of all the annoyances which I suffered in that pretty house, full of intrigues as it was, and wherein no one really cared for its mistress, except her faithful maid, Victorine, who was her god-daughter, and the child of a peasant on her estate. I learnt most of the accusations against me from Mademoiselle d’A—— herself. In spite of her unhappy state, she at times had a return of her natural tact, and seeing nothing in my manner to justify the suspicions against

me, she said to me with a smile : “ How stupid and credulous the lower ranks often are ! That woman pretended my life was in danger from you.” Sometimes, however, when these suspicions recurred suddenly to her mind, she made me very uncomfortable ; but, in general, good and amiable as she was in her own way, we had long and interesting conversations together ; and sometimes she led the way to very serious discussions. Her relations were full of life and spirit, and marked by an originality which was not entirely owing to her state of mind. One could perceive her character must have always been an uncommon one. Occasionally she would smile at my ignorance ; and I must here relate one conversation which took place as we were walking in the garden. She had gone off wildly upon one of her manias, and I was full of my own thoughts as I silently followed her ; when suddenly she turned round and said :

“ Have you ever had lessons in astronomy ? ”

“ No.”

“ But I suppose you know something of the history of the heavens ? ”

“ Only the little I learnt about them in my geography lessons,” I replied.

“ I am sure, then,” said she, “ they have told you the sun is a globular body ?”

“ Yes,” said I, “ and that is the usual opinion.”

“ Ah !” she continued, “ they are all wrong. What we call the sun is merely a hole in the sky.”

At this, I could not help laughing ; but she went on with the eloquence of a Pythonesse.

“ I tell you the sun is a hole in the sky ; but it is the gate of Eternity, through which some feeble rays of the power of God penetrate even to us. Ah ! you are not laughing now !”

“ I confess myself amazed at your definition,” I replied ; “ I can only admire it in silence. I am sure every one that heard you must think with me that it is a beautiful idea.”

I saw at Mademoiselle d'A——'s house all the principal physicians in Paris, both separately and together. Mademoiselle d'A—— confessed it made her nervous when that imposing conclave assembled before her ; but she soon recovered herself, and answered

whatever questions were put to her very cheerfully ; and even as I write—though thirty years have since passed away, I cannot help smiling at the recollection of the ridiculous subjects that were gravely discussed there by the faculty, who were obliged, for the good of their patient, to treat them as matters of as great importance as she did.

Whilst we were all occupied in exactly carrying out the physicians' prescriptions, the law-suit continued ; and M. F——'s opponents put about various reports, first that his cousin was not mad at all, but merely described as such by him, that he might get possession of her fortune ; and then that her mind was certainly rather weak ; but that the malady was increased by those about her, purposely disobeying the doctors' advice. All these calumnies were circulated about the world, and dinned into the ears of the judges.

The tribunal selected a committee to ascertain the real state of Mademoiselle d'A——, and find out if she lived, as had been reported, in an unwholesome sort of prison, where want of air, of every attention, and even of good food

combined to make her mad, if she were not so already. I was warned of the intended visit of these gentlemen, and introduced them myself to each of the servants, giving them at the same time, the fullest information about the expenses of Mademoiselle d'A——, her table, her way of living, and in short all about her. They seemed agreeably surprised at the pleasantness of her abode, and having shown them to her room, I left them alone with her, wishing to show them how much liberty she enjoyed.

Her old aunt, however, acted differently. She had come to prepare her niece for this important visit, which was to decide concerning the truth of the accusations to which she had lent the weight of her respectable name. All the time the sitting lasted, she held her niece by the hand, and twitched it whenever she said anything extraordinary, which only made her exclaim: "Let me alone, my dear aunt, you know nothing about it."

The gentlemen asked Mademoiselle d'A—— if she had any complaint to make either against the lady who was with her, or her own servants?

She replied they were good and faithful, and she had nothing to complain of but her freedom being invaded by her being shut up, so that though she was really both rich and independent, she was deprived of her liberty. As to the lady who was with her, she said she was a very good person, and she had nothing to say against her, except that both she and her servants had the weakness of obeying those pretended doctors in everything, and making her take baths, and do other things she did not like, but, she added, she quite forgave them, because they had the fashionable malady.

“May we inquire, Madam, what that is?” said one of the gentlemen.

“They are insane,” she replied, “they are all insane, though their insanity is of a mild and gentle kind, like that of the pretended doctors who come to see me. Doubtless, gentlemen, you must have perceived the malady that reigns in Paris now, and has to do with the moon and also with Mars and Jupiter.”

And here she went off into the wildest vagaries, while her poor aunt tried in vain to stop

her by pinching the hand she still tightly held, which merely made her again repeat: "Do let me go, my dear aunt; why should you stop my speaking? I know much more about business than you do, who never could do any in your life!"

The judges feeling quite satisfied, now took their leave; and certainly the old aunt played the most ridiculous part in this little scene, as she saw before her the entire contradiction of all she was maintaining in the court. I escorted her to her carriage, but she was apparently still determined to stick to her point, for she said to me almost in so many words, that she entreated me not to kill her niece. "Madam," I said, "your age insures my forgiveness," and so I left her. Poor woman! without knowing it, she was entirely the tool and the dupe of a troop of obscure intriguers, who led her in their own dark and miry ways.

Some time after, I was quietly at work in my own room, when I saw M. F—— come in, followed by one of his cousins. His presence in the house at all announced some important

news ; and in fact he had come straight from the court to tell me he had gained his lawsuit.

“ You well deserve to be the first person informed of this,” he said, “ because you have gone through so much in our cause. I am named legal guardian of my cousin, and administrator of her possessions. After the judgment, the Imperial procurator spoke of you.”

“ What could he say of me ?”

“ I begged you might be publicly cleared from the slanders which have been put about. He represented in forcible and eloquent words how much respect was due to the misfortunes which have compelled you to accept a situation so little fitted for you ; and how shameful it is to spread evil reports about a young lady who is unprotected in a strange place, and whose only possession is her good name. I am also come to beg you,” he continued, “ to do me the favour of coming to dine with me at my mother’s house to-morrow, when all my family will be assembled, and will be able to thank you for all you have endured for us.”

I accepted the invitation very gratefully, for I could not but feel the extreme delicacy with which M. F—— disguised from me all that was degrading in my position, but still I felt very nervous at the idea of being presented to all his family. I hid my feelings nevertheless under an enormous bonnet, and went. I was received by them all with the natural grace of well-bred people, and the gentleness peculiar to that family who were as remarkable for their amiability as for their talents. I came back highly gratified with my day, though rather surprised to be so much thanked for what was doubtless, after all, a very imperfect performance of my duties.

“Pray tell me, dear Victorine,” I said to Madame Royer Collard, the first time I saw her after the law-suit was decided, “what were the calumnies from which I was so publicly justified?”

“Is it possible,” she exclaimed, “that you do not know all that has been said against you?”

“How should I?” I replied, “consider-

ing the solitude in which I have been living."

"Well I must tell you then, that in the first place they say you are very beautiful (which comes, you see, of not having seen you), and then they add that you assist M. F—— in squandering away his cousin's fortune; and that besides that you have bewitched my husband, and are clever enough to carry on both these intrigues at once."

"That is too horrid!" I exclaimed; "how can any one take away the character of a poor creature, who has never injured them in such a way. I do, indeed, from my heart, bless that delicacy which kept me in ignorance of such slanders, as the knowledge of them would have made me miserable."

"They add that they cannot think how I can be so foolish," continued Victorine, "as to be fond of so dangerous a person. But you have found a champion in my aunt, Madame de Choiseuil, who took up the cudgels for you bravely in an assembly where these calumnies were being circulated. M. de Royer," said

she, "is my niece's husband, and a very excellent man he is ; and as to my cousin, Mademoiselle des Echerolles, why she is not at all handsome, but she is as good as she has been unfortunate ; and we all ought to respect misfortune."

The law-suit being over, I was able to lead a much more agreeable life. Mademoiselle d'A——'s state being pronounced incurable, she was declared hopelessly insane, and all medical treatment was given up. Nothing remained to be done but to make her life pass as pleasantly as possible, and being no longer thwarted in little things, her temper grew less irritable, and her manner much quieter, and the violent scenes I so greatly dreaded became far less frequent. I cannot deny, however, that those scenes, when they did occur, had their dangers, as I will prove by relating one of them before concluding this chapter.

Mademoiselle d'A—— would not be parted day or night from a certain large green umbrella, which she had covered with scarfs and white cockades, and called the Shield of Provi-

dence, and to which she attributed wonderful powers. The physicians decided that this must be taken from her, and accordingly one day, when she came out of the bath she missed it altogether. There was a great fuss, and a great stir, she upset everything in the house, and searched the whole garden, but could not find her treasure anywhere. When she came to dinner, her face bore traces of great suffering, and the grief for her loss seemed to increase upon her, as she saw the place vacant which her umbrella usually occupied.

Her despair rose to such a pitch, that we had hardly began, when she jumped up in a fury, and rushed towards me with a knife in her hand. I thought I felt it already in my shoulders, but she passed by me, and I had only a great fright, which I flattered myself I bore beautifully.

She thought better of her purpose, I suppose, for she sat down again without doing any mischief. I never asked her what she meant to have done, but I always dined alone after that, and I own I should not have been sorry

if one of the physicians had found himself between my shoulders and the knife, that he might have known, by experience, how easy it is sometimes to give orders, and how much more difficult to see them executed.

CHAPTER XIV.

My native land, good night !

CHILDE HAROLD.

MR. SUCH-A-ONE AGAIN—ANOTHER CHANGE OF FORTUNE—I
SEEK A SUCCESSOR—ELIZABETH—MY JOURNEY—A SUDDEN
BLOW—A HAPPY HOME.

I HAVE said before, that I saw the gentleman again whom we christened “ Mr. Such-a-one ;” that puzzling being who was very like a rogue, and yet might turn out an honest man. He found me out in Mademoiselle d’A——’s house. I recognized him at once, though he was certainly much altered by a very severe illness he had gone through. He could hardly walk, so excessively lame was he, and he looked thoroughly miserable. I could not help pity-

ing his sad condition, though I had an instinctive aversion to him. He knew all Mademoiselles d'A——'s history ; had known her brother, and told me several particulars about the family.

"What an astonishing man !" I said to myself, "he knows every body." But I feared him as if something evil was hid under his humble demeanour. I offered to try and get him into some charitable institution, where he would be taken care of as long as he lived, and he accepted my offer—but gave me a false direction, which confirmed my suspicions, and I never saw him again, and began to suspect that even his lameness was assumed at the door.

Is it not enough to make one shudder when one thinks of an existence so entirely based upon fraud and deception : as that of a man who crept into families under whatever mask was likely to make him most acceptable, and learnt the secrets of each that he might have more power to deceive others. What constant constraint and dissimulation he must have practised ! Putting all morality aside, I wonder any one can take such trouble to be a rogue !

A short time after the law-suit about Made-

moiselle d'A—— was decided, I received a note from Madame de Malet, begging me to go to her immediately, as she had something of importance to communicate to me.

“Sit down there,” she said to me when I arrived; with even more than her usual kindness. “Here is pen and paper; write at once, and thank the Duchess of Würtemberg, who has given you the situation of governess to her daughters, the princesses.”

“Impossible! you are dreaming! I cannot fill such a situation. I am not qualified for so exalted a post. I have no accomplishments.”

“You need none; the princesses will have masters.”

“I am not sufficiently well-read.”

“You can educate yourself now; the princesses are but young at present, you will have plenty of time.”

“I assure you I do not feel fitted for it.”

“I know you better,” said my indulgent friend always anxious for my good. “And the duchess knows you too.”

“How can she possibly do so?” I inquired.

“In a very simple way; I sent your letters

to my sister, who is her lady in waiting, and she showed them to her. She was then residing at St. Petersburg. Now she is in Würtemberg which is more convenient for you. Here is her letter ; do as I tell you. Sit down at once and thank her for it."

Madame de Malet set aside all my objections, overcame all my difficulties, and made me accept at once, without leaving me any time for reflection. The picture she drew of the virtues and good qualities of the duchess conquered all my reluctance ; and I was engaged before I fully realised what I was doing. My kind friend feeling sure she had contributed to my happiness, seemed so delighted that I could not find it in my heart to damp her joy by a longer resistance.

I do not know what I wrote, or how I got back to my room. I could not sleep that night ; so sudden a change in my circumstances upset all my ideas, and filled my mind with strange reflections. " It seems as if providence favoured my endeavours," I said to myself, " since I see myself chosen in preference to many far more deserving, doubtless than myself, of filling a

situation which I have taken no steps to obtain. Yet, though I leave the society of a mad woman for one full of talent and agreeableness, I have many friends here. I am pretty much mistress of a nice house ; am well lodged, and well cared for, what do I need more ? When first I resolved to leave my country, I had nothing of all this ; but now I feel I may be leaving a solid reality, to seek I know not what in a distant land.

I told M. Royer of my new position, but he did not approve of it.

“We know you, we love you,” he said. “Why will you not stay with us ? Are you sure you shall like these strangers ? Are you sure they will like you ? Think well what you are doing. It is no small sacrifice to give up your country and seek a new one with totally different language and manners. If you do not suit, what shall you do ? When you had no other home it was a different thing ; but now you must consider, if you are not leaving a certainty for an uncertainty ; and reflect that you are offered a smaller salary than you receive here, and will have more difficult duties to

perform !” There was a great deal of truth in all this ; but I had engaged myself.

M. F—— said pretty much the same thing ; and expressed himself sincerely sorry for my departure. He added that if I was not satisfied with my salary it might be increased, and even hinted that his family were so anxious to retain me in his cousin’s house, that they would not grudge making a little sacrifice themselves to ensure me a sum of money at Mademoiselle d’A——’s death. I was deeply touched by so many proofs of the esteem in which I was held ; but the step I had taken was irrevocable. I felt however, that I was really rather foolish for leaving my country, when I had just gained a settled subsistence in it ; and that in seeking a higher situation I might lose all ; for though I carefully concealed it from M. Royer, the duchess had only agreed to take me on trial, so that after six months I should be left without a home again, if I had the misfortune not to give her satisfaction.

“Now, most of the disagreeables of your present situation are got over,” remarked M. F——, “and, except the annoyance of being occasionally in the company of an insane person,

you may live pretty much as you please. Moreover I am sure it would go against your principles to leave before your place is filled up, and I warn you I am difficult to please."

"I have thought of that difficulty," I replied, "and have provided against it. I have another friend of Madame Royer's to propose to you to fill my place; and if you refuse to try the second, I shall think the first has disappointed you." M. F—— very civilly promised to do as I wished.

As soon as I had taken my resolution to go to Würtemberg, I formed a plan which would irrevocably confirm my decision, and even prevent my feeling any regrets, if, in the case of my not suiting the Duchess of Würtemberg, I found myself homeless when the six months of trial were over. When I informed M. Royer that Her Serene Highness had condescended to appoint me as governess to her two eldest daughters, I asked him if he would allow me to propose as my successor Mademoiselle Elizabeth de la R., as old a friend of his wife's as myself.

"I ask you," I continued, "because I cannot help wondering why you did not fix upon her

from the first? Elizabeth is better educated than I am, and far more to be pitied. She is a very interesting person, as well as an unhappy one, and I have often asked myself why I was preferred before her."

"The difficulty of the choice," he replied, "made us hesitate for three days and nights. You were both unhappy, and it was painful to reject either; but I feared Elizabeth's distressed circumstances might prevent her obtaining the place at all, and so I named you."

"If that is the only objection," I said, "I think I shall not fail in obtaining it for her."

I had often met Elizabeth at Madame Royer's house; they had been brought up in the same convent; and a warm friendship had united them through all their reciprocal trials. As to Victorine, she could forget her past sorrows now by the side of a husband, whose sole delight was in making her happy, and surrounded by charming children. Elizabeth, on the contrary, was weighed down by a heavy calamity—her father was languishing in a prison.

M. de la R. having been compromised in a conspiracy against Napoleon, was arrested and

shut up in the Temple. Heavy accusations were brought against him, and his life was in danger. The interest which all the inhabitants of his department shewed in him, increased his peril by making him of more importance in the Emperor's eyes. That great man received the deputation who came to beg for M. de R.'s pardon, very ill.

"He wished to take my life," he said; "justice demands his own—he must die."

One of the deputation perceiving that their interference was injuring the cause of the unhappy man they wished to save, added in an entreating tone :

"If your Majesty know him to be guilty, we can only implore your clemency to avert the death of the father of a family, who would leave eleven orphans behind him."

"If that be the case," replied Napoleon, "I will give you M. de R.'s life, but not his liberty, as I think it inconsistent with my own safety."

He remained in the Temple prison, and Elizabeth was the only one of his numerous family who got leave to remain in Paris, and see her father. She went daily to the Temple

to share the humble repast of her dear prisoner ; and every evening she returned to her solitary home, where she often underwent great privations, as in winter she constantly had no fire for want of money to buy fuel, and staid in bed to keep herself warm, till the hour at which she went to her father.

She made several efforts to touch Napoleon's heart. All Paris heard that one night after a great display of fire-works on the Seine, at the moment when the Emperor was leaving the Tuileries to return to Saint-Germain, a very pretty young lady, escaping the vigilance of his escort, flung herself at his feet to solicit an important favour. The world spoke much of her courage, her beauty, and her tears ; but no one heard the harsh refusal she received, and none of those who praised her bravery saw the poor Elizabeth alone after the busy crowd had passed away—alone, at a distance from her solitary dwelling without a protector or a friend. Her enthusiasm which had supported her through everything, failed when the cold chill of disappointment dispelled her hopes ; and she could hardly drag her weary limbs

back to her lonely home, which once reached, she took to her bed and remained there through a severe illness.

The reader will understand that Elizabeth, after this, was uppermost in my mind—and even that I could no longer repent the step I had taken, since the thought of her soothed my regrets for all I was leaving. In short, Elizabeth seemed pointed out to me by Providence as an example of courage and fortitude; and it was a true pleasure to me to feel that I was able to ameliorate her condition.

I hastened to her as soon as I left M. Royer, to impart my plan to her. She asked for time to consult her father about it, and very soon sent me word that she accepted my proposal thankfully. I afterwards heard she was then on the very point of being compelled to leave Paris, being unable to exist there any longer, and thus her father would have lost his only comfort and pleasure in his prison.

Now I had every motive for hastening my departure, which Madame de Malet was very anxious I should do, as she thought it desira-

ble I should lose no time in seeking my new abode. When my arrangements were nearly concluded, I went to M. F—— to tell him the day of my departure. He was a good deal surprised.

“I have found no one to replace you,” he said, “and I must confess I had still hopes of prevailing on you to alter your mind. Cannot you at least put off your journey?”

“Not easily,” I replied; “because I have found a travelling companion, in a good German, who will interpret for me, and such an opportunity must not be neglected. I recommend you, however, to take in my place Mademoiselle Elizabeth de la R——, I am sure she will give you satisfaction.”

“But she is reckoned a suspicious character; and my cousin, too, attracted the attention of the police by the turn her insanity took at the first, so that I must be careful. I am really puzzled what to do, you hurry me so!”

“That is just what I intended!” I thought to myself, and then replied “We can arrange all that, sir! Only take Mademoiselle de la R—— till you can find some one who will suit

you better. Allow me to bring her to be introduced to you, you will then be sure of having an excellent person about your cousin, whose noble and grateful heart will devote its tenderest care to her. Have not Elizabeth's virtues won general admiration?"

He invited us both to come and dine at his mother's.

Mademoiselle de la R—— was approved of and immediately engaged, for which I thanked God from my heart. I was certain that she would give satisfaction as soon as she was known; the important thing was to leave no time for another to be chosen, and I honestly confess I did my best that it should be so. I will add here (to gratify any laudable feeling of curiosity that may have been excited by her past history) that a few years after, Napoleon was touched by the strength of her filial virtue, and granted her her father's liberty,—that is to say, commuted his sentence into an exile to Previns, where he lived peaceably enough. Elizabeth remained nearly twenty years with Mademoiselle d'A——, and did not leave her till her death, when she was

generously recompensed by the family for her care of her.

Before leaving Paris, I felt bound to go and thank Madame de Choiseul for the favour she had extended to me in contradicting the false accusations which had been uttered against me. She received me very graciously, but when I told her of my approaching departure, she seemed astonished, and said, in a loud, harsh voice :

“Why, cousin, you are going to educate these princesses, and you have never had any education yourself !”

These words made my heart ache. I thought them rude and indelicate ; they were only true. When all the duties of my station gradually unfolded themselves before me, and I became daily more sensible of their extent and their importance—more astonished at the variety of duties attached to my office,—and more surprised at myself for having so heedlessly accepted it, Madame de Choiseul was fully justified in my eyes, and I often used to hear her words ringing in my ears, when some of

those feelings of weariness and despondency which must be occasionally felt by all who are in such a position as mine, took possession of me.

Mademoiselle d'A—— was pleased at my departure, as she thought she should then regain her liberty. She was very civil, however, and took leave of me quite kindly, saying, after many good wishes for my future welfare :

“I do not need a maid-of-honour now. When I ascend my throne again, I shall choose my ladies-in-waiting myself.”

Madame de Malet, by obliging me to depart so quickly, deprived me of the pleasure of seeing Madame de Brèze again, that kind friend who was just on the point of returning to Paris. Here was an additional sacrifice I had to make. In the solitude of my long journey, I found many a deep regret buried in my heart. The momentary excitement of my sudden decision had lulled them to sleep, but every sad feeling was aroused again at the sight of the Rhine—that majestic barrier which I was about to inter-

pose between my father and myself, which was to divide me possibly for ever from country and from friends. Oh ! how I pitied myself then for the uncertainty which hung over my future life ! Oh ! how I longed to kneel and kiss my native soil, and cry aloud : “ Farewell my home, and all I love and care for ! ”

My travelling companion having left me within half a day’s journey of Louisbourg (where the Court spent half the year), I made my entry into that city quite alone. It was in vain they asked me my business at the gates—the German sentence I had been all the morning trying to learn had quite gone out of my head. I could only tell them my name. The soldier who was interrogating me could not understand what it was, and gave me his little book to write it down in ; but when it was written he could not read it. At this we all laughed together, but my coachman coming to my assistance, they let me pass at last, and I reached the hotel much amused at my adventure.

“ Do you understand French, Sir,” I inquired

of the first person who came up to the carriage, and a great mercy I felt it, when he replied in the affirmative.

I ordered some dinner, and retired to my own room to pass the few hours which yet remained to me of freedom quite alone. Every minute seemed a boon to me.

About five o'clock, I wrote a note to Mademoiselle de Belonde, Madame de Malet's sister, to whom I owed the situation I was come to fill. All my hopes of comfort rested on her, in a country of which I understood neither the language nor the manners.

"Come to me, I entreat you," I said. "I greatly need your help. Come and give me courage, and instruct me in my new duties, for I depend upon you entirely, and shall feel less severed from all I have left when I am with you."

This note once dispatched, I felt I was no longer my own mistress, and awaited the answer with the utmost trepidation. It was not long in coming. I soon saw a man enter my room, clad in a canary-coloured coat, em-

broidered in silver, and wearing on his head a strangely-shaped cocked hat, with black, red, and yellow feathers depending from it. I might have taken him for a rope-dancer, who had mistaken his way, had he not handed me a note. It was the answer I was expecting.

"Mademoiselle de Belonde," I read in that paper, "was buried three days ago. Follow the servant who brings this."

This was all I could take in at the moment. I saw however the signature "Chaillot" at the end of a few lines, which appeared to have been hurriedly scrawled.

This unexpected news cast me into a state of consternation I can find no words to describe. This sad loss deprived me, at a blow, of all the assistance and advice I had hoped to obtain from Mademoiselle de Belonde, and I felt as if I was again being torn from my country.

I followed the bearer almost mechanically, being in an agony of mind which seemed to deprive me of all power of reflection. I went

on through street after street and room after room, without forming any distinct idea of what I was doing, till at last some one caught hold of me by the gown, and exclaimed :

“Where are you running on to, Mademoiselle? You must wait here !”

I collected my scattered senses as best I could, and found beside me Mademoiselle de Chaillot, who was governess to the two youngest princesses. She begged my pardon for the confused note she had sent me, but said it was occasioned by the direction of mine, which had quite upset her.

Feeling very wretched, I sate down by her, and she talked to me a little of Mademoiselle de Belonde, and gave me some particulars of her illness, and of the Duchess's affection for her, which she had shown by the tenderest cares throughout her sufferings.

“Can I see the Duchess?” I inquired.

“No, not now,” was the reply. “She is gone to the play at Stuttgard. You will see her to-morrow.

This answer rather jarred against my feelings,

but I did not know then that princesses have not even the liberty of tears, and that being constantly compelled to appear in public, they are forced to disguise the sorrows of their hearts beneath smiles, greetings, and commonplace speeches.

We were interrupted by the arrival of the four princesses, who had just been dressed to go to the Queen (Charlotte Augusta Mathilde, a princess of England), to whom Mademoiselle de Chaillot was to take them. If I was an object of curiosity in their eyes, they, on the other hand were most deeply interesting to me. I was quite charmed with the gentle and innocent faces of these four little girls, whose dress was extremely simple, which I thought an additional charm in those of their rank.

Left alone amongst people I could not converse with, and unable to endure the weight of my own thoughts, I wrote to Madame de Malet in order to try and relieve my oppressed heart, by mingling my grief with hers. I was interrupted by the arrival of the Count de Chaillot,

(the preceptor of the Duke of Wurtemberg's eldest son), who, having been informed of my arrival by his daughter, had left the Court to come and bid a countrywoman welcome. This conversation was a relief to me, and very soon the princesses returned, and the pleasure of giving them the playthings I had brought with me for them, and seeing the delight they caused, shed some little light on the gloom of an evening which will never be effaced from my memory.

When all around were sunk in repose, I could not obtain any. I was to see the Duchess the next morning, and the important meeting kept all sleep from my eyes. I was walking rapidly up and down my room to try and subdue my mental agitation by bodily fatigue, when I heard footsteps in the distance which gradually approached, and presently my door was opened, and M. de Chaillot entered with a lady, whose dignified appearance and gracious manner told me at once it must be the Duchess herself.

I was struck by her beauty, but far more by

the benevolence so strongly imprinted on her features.

"Mademoiselle," said the Duchess to me in a peculiarly kind voice, "I would not put off so interesting an interview till to-morrow; we shall both of us sleep the better for having met."

Then she continued speaking for some little time, touched on the pain I must have suffered in leaving my family and country; and begged me to tell her how I had left Madame de Malet, whom she supposed already acquainted with her loss.

"She did not know it, Madame, when I left her," I replied; "and while congratulating me on the friend I should find in her sister, half envied me the happiness of seeing her."

There was so much mind as well as heart in all the Duchess said to me, and the expression of her face was so gentle and benign, that when she left me I felt happy in the prospect of belonging to her, and full of an earnest desire of deserving her esteem, and repaying her confidence, if not by my talents, at least by the

faithfulness with which I should carry out her orders.

My opinion of her, formed at this first interview was never altered; and I often felt thankful for the happiness of daily seeing and knowing a person gifted with so many virtues.

I find it difficult to refrain here from sketching the portrait of the noble qualities which adorned this illustrious lady; but respect forbids it, as well as the fear of wounding that modesty which crowns all her virtues.

Ever thoughtful for her children's good, the Duchess looked into their hearts with a mother's penetrating eye, and carefully cultivated every precious seed of good dispositions which God had implanted there. She loved to strengthen them in every good thought and feeling; and beneath her watchful cares, I saw them all grow up in the image of their excellent mother. What better wish could I form for them?

I soon became really attached to my young charges, and thenceforth my lot was a happy one.

I have now become old in their household,

loaded with benefits, which have even been extended to my own family.

And, oh ! you, for whom these lines are particularly intended—*then* a child, now a wife and mother, and devoted to the duties those sacred titles impose upon you—receive in conclusion my earnest wishes for your happiness—happiness ever attained most easily by the pure in heart, of whom you are one.

THE END.

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